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The Inclusive City? Between Socio-Spatial Inclusion and
Contested Urban Spaces: The Case of Potsdam's
Rechenzentrum

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Abstract

The term *inclusion* has gained recent popularity; used by a variety of institutions and politicians, cities want to be and seem as inclusive as possible, but it remains unclear as to when a city is an inclusive city and, above all, through which measures it is to be achieved. Therefore, this thesis investigates the practical implementations of social inclusion in urban environments, employing a socio-spatial perspective. This case study centers on the Rechenzentrum, a socio-creative institution, located in the German city of Potsdam, which is characterized by a high level of segregation. At the same time, Potsdam faces long-standing political disputes over the city's appearance between Prussian rebuilding and the preservation of GDR-era architecture. The Rechenzentrum is one of the last remaining GDR buildings in Potsdam and provides spaces for artists and non-profit organizations who support vulnerable population groups, e.g., people affected by poverty.

Through qualitative methods, including 11 interviews with urban planners, members of the Rechenzentrum, and non-profit collaborators, and official documents published by the city, a thematic content analysis is applied to address the research questions. This thesis thus works to explain how the Rechenzentrum contributes to social inclusion in the city of Potsdam. The final results are conducted through an abductive approach, triangulating the empirical data in combination with Martina Löw's relational theory of space. The findings suggest that the Rechenzentrum serves as an institution that fulfils several aspects to make Potsdam a more inclusive city. These observations contribute to the field of social inclusion in urban environments by revealing the normative proclaimed goals postulated by city administration and the spaces that value inclusion in different forms by supporting marginalized individuals to participate in opportunities, enhancing their socio-economic resources.

Key words:

Social inclusion, Single case-study, Potsdam, Rechenzentrum, Inclusive urban development, Socio-spatial, Spatial Inclusion, Inclusive city

Zusammenfassung

Der Begriff *Inklusion* hat in jüngster Zeit an Popularität gewonnen; Städte und eine Vielzahl von Institutionen und Politiker:innen verwenden den Begriff, doch es bleibt unklar, wann eine Stadt tatsächlich inklusiv wird und vor allem, durch welche Maßnahmen dies erreicht werden kann.

In dieser Arbeit wird daher die praktische Umsetzung von sozialer Inklusion in urbanen Umgebungen aus sozialräumlicher Perspektive untersucht. Im Fokus dieser Fallstudie steht das Rechenzentrum, eine sozial-kreative Institution im deutschen Potsdam, eine Stadt, die durch ein hohes Maß an Segregation gekennzeichnet ist. Zugleich gibt es in Potsdam lange politische Auseinandersetzungen um das Erscheinungsbild der Stadt zwischen preußischem Wiederaufbau und Bewahrung der Architektur aus der DDR-Zeit. Das Rechenzentrum ist eines der letzten noch erhaltenen DDR-Gebäude in Potsdam und bietet in erster Linie leistbare Arbeitsräume für Künstler:innen, stellt darüber aber auch Räumlichkeiten für non-profit Organisationen, bereit, die vulnerable Bevölkerungsgruppen, z.B. von Armut betroffene Menschen, unterstützen.

Anhand qualitativer Methoden, darunter 11 Interviews mit Stadtplaner:innen, Mitgliedern des Rechenzentrums und gemeinnützigen Mitarbeiter*innen sowie offizielle Dokumente, die von der Stadt veröffentlicht wurden, wird eine thematische Inhaltsanalyse durchgeführt, um die leitenden Forschungsfragen zu beantworten. In dieser Arbeit wird daher erläutert, wie das Rechenzentrum zur sozialen Inklusion in Potsdam beiträgt. Die Endergebnisse werden durch einen abduktiven Ansatz erzielt, bei dem die empirischen Daten in Kombination mit Martina Löws relationaler Raumtheorie trianguliert werden. Die Ergebnisse deuten darauf hin, dass das Rechenzentrum als Institution dient, die mehrere Aspekte erfüllt, um Potsdam zu einer inklusiveren Stadt zu machen. Die Resultate bilden eine fundierte Basis um einen Beitrag zur Diskussion um soziale Inklusion im städtischen Raum beizusteuern. Indem aufgezeigt wird, inwieweit die normativ formulierten Ziele der Stadt Potsdam – insbesondere jene, die auf Inklusion in verschiedenen Formen abzielen – durch das Rechenzentrum umgesetzt werden, wird deutlich, wie marginalisierte Personen tatsächlich in die Stadtgesellschaft inkludiert und ihre sozioökonomischen Ressourcen erweitert werden.

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Finally, I dedicate this thesis to all those who work tirelessly every day for urban and rural citizens who aim for spaces and places devoted to inclusion, justice, and the fight against any form of discrimination, continuing to build environments serving everyone regardless of their background and income.

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1 Introduction

1.1 The Emergence of the Inclusive City

Today's cities are increasingly diversified environments for communities from different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds (Park, 2024). Each week, roughly three million people move to cities globally (Schreiber & Carius, 2016), leading to an increase in the urban proportion of the world population from 56% in 2021 to 68% in 2050 (UN-Habitat, 2022). Consequently, cities and municipalities face the dual challenge of managing urban populations composed of people with diverse backgrounds, while simultaneously developing strategies to combat growing social inequality and spatial segregation (Schreiber & Carius, 2016). Along with rising polarization and economic inequality, social inclusion continues to pose a significant challenge, with underprivileged individuals often being excluded from essential social networks and denied participation in economic and cultural prospects (Park, 2024).

Since different places have distinct histories, cultures, institutions, and social structures, certain facets of social exclusion - economic, social, or political - are more noticeable and important than others (Silver, 2015). Concepts of social inclusion differ significantly depending on the theoretical framework on which they are based, the model of society they adopt, the way they think about social organization, and the ideas they convey of an inclusive society (Silver, 1994). Social structures also vary by country, with some having more diversity than others (*ibid.*). Therefore, national settings influence both the policy responses to social inclusion in the realms of economy, society, and politics and the observable characteristics and culturally relevant elements of social exclusion (*ibid.*). Understanding national and local dynamics is essential for developing effective policies that foster social inclusion. According to Silver (2015), social inclusion is not a universally homogeneous phenomenon, but depends largely on the respective social, political, and geographical context in which it is observed. This underscores the importance of context-sensitive research to capture the varied and complex nature of social inclusion and exclusion within different settings.

Anttiroiko and De Jong (2020) emphasize that a central aspect of urban inclusion strategies is not to look at economic growth in isolation, but to link it to normative goals such as democratic participation, social justice, and fairness. Since the 1980s, in particular, an entrepreneurial approach to urban management has been developing, which has been accompanied by the use of city marketing strategies to attract tourists, investors, and new residents (Anttiroiko & De Jong, 2020). Simultaneously, more and more branding, labeling, and categories have been and are being used by

cities to suggest an image to the outside world, which also reveals how these cities perceive themselves. (ibid.)

Particularly in metropolitan areas, where industry concentration and economic development can exacerbate inequality, urban processes can occasionally promote unequal inclusion and strengthen social divisions. The prevalence of high-tech and other cutting-edge professional services in economically thriving places makes urban disparities more apparent, indicating that urban economic processes are pushing for less inclusive urban growth. (ibid.)

Between 2014 and 2019, "smart city" and "sustainable city" were the most frequently used terms in academic publications, with a noticeable increase in the use of "smart city" during the late 2010s (ibid.). While the smart city concept has evolved to integrate labels and content-related focal points of a social nature, a number of other new city labels have emerged in academic publications in the last 30 years. These include the *Open City*, *Safe City*, *Sharing City*, and the *Inclusive City* (Anttiroiko & De Jong, 2020). For example, the city of Vienna is aiming to become an "inclusive smart city as a driver of urban innovation and able to achieve urban sustainability by promoting collaborative urban spaces" (Romanelli, 2022). The term "inclusive" is being included in the titles of an increasing number of cities, including those that have become well-known as knowledge, smart, or sustainable cities, such as Amsterdam, Copenhagen, or Melbourne. It appears that the term "inclusion" refers to a collection of socially conscious ideals and related institutional practices that are in line with the social liberal attitude that characterizes Western politics, business, media, and public discourse. (Anttiroiko & De Jong, 2020)

The inclusive city, a novel idea and policy approach focused on urban development introduced by scholars and policymakers, aims to end inequality and exclusion in urban areas (Liang et al., 2022). In recent years the concept evolved into a theoretical idea centered on how cities can improve their inclusionary performance by organizing the involvement of local stakeholders and enabling each of them "to contribute to inclusive urban prosperity" (Liang et al., 2022, p. 60). In the context of developing smart cities, inclusion has become more important, shifting the focus from a technology-driven model, where access to resources is often limited to tech-experienced people who are familiar with technology, to a more human-centered approach. Inclusion is receiving growing attention through smart city developments, as technological innovations in urban settings that marginalize significant portions of society are seen as morally problematic (Liang et al., 2022). This approach prioritizes tolerance and support for those who may struggle to fully participate in technological innovations, ensuring broader access to urban opportunities. (Liang et al., 2022)

The concept of the inclusive city was promoted by the United Nations (UN) in 2001 and further developed by entities like the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank. This trend is evidenced by the increasing number of inclusive city projects and initiatives worldwide, highlighting a collective aim towards more inclusive urban development. (Zhao et al., 2023) International organizations such as the UN aim to “make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” (UN, 2015, p. 24). Similarly, the European Union (EU) refers to the aspect of inclusion in its objectives for future urban development, particularly in the context of poverty and migration (EU, 2016). There is a trend towards achieving inclusive urban environments. Nevertheless, the question arises as to how inclusion and, above all, what kind of inclusion should be achieved. Developing an inclusive city requires knowledge of its nature, attributes, and components, as well as the ways in which they might be combined or balanced against one another through policy decisions (Liang et al., 2022). Grasping the topic and the concept, as well as the implementation of an inclusive city, requires an understanding of inclusion and exclusion in all its facets and dimensions. The dimensions described by Liang et al. (2022) make it clear that inclusion in cities cannot be understood one-dimensionally, but encompasses different areas such as the economy, society, culture, digitalization, and politics, each of which offers its own starting points for inclusive urban development. Despite their distinctions, these five aspects are interconnected and mutually beneficial, contributing to the city's overall inclusivity through their synergistic benefits. (Liang et al., 2022)

However, the coherence of the inclusive city remains poorly understood (*ibid.*), even as the use of this increasingly popular concept continues to rise (Liang et al., 2022; Anttiroiko & De Jong, 2020; Zhao et al., 2023). But spatial and social dimensions are crucial for establishing inclusive urban environments, with the spatial dimension covering key attributes. Social and spatial inclusion are both complex concepts that can affect each other. For example, variables of spatial inclusion are able to enhance social inclusion when less privileged populations are supported with socio-economic possibilities proposed by the city in which they live. The notion of spatial inclusion is associated with affordable housing, physical integration of diverse social groups, and solid mobility for all individuals. (Park, 2024)

The counterpart of social inclusion, which is social exclusion, can therefore also arise and be expressed as spatial exclusion (Silver, 2015). Spatial factors can have an impact on social inclusion because they limit people's behavior. People who are more likely to be socially excluded, in particular, may be significantly impacted by spatial factors because they frequently have limited financial resources or significant mobility constraints. Nevertheless, social and spatial inclusion are linked and exhibit both

complexities due to the fact that the elements of social inclusion are related to each other. (Park, 2024)

In the end, understanding how to create an inclusive city for all of its inhabitants depends on conducting a deeper investigation of the relationships between spatial and social elements in the context of inclusive city development. While the definition of an inclusive city varies across academic and policy contexts (Zhao et al., 2023), key elements and indicators consistently emerge that highlight what such a city should offer its citizens. Building on the foundational concepts of spatial and social inclusion outlined in the previous sections, one could say that an inclusive city must address not only equitable access to resources but also foster active engagement and representation in decision-making processes. These aspects are critical to ensuring that urban development strategies truly benefit all residents, particularly those from marginalized groups.

Social inclusion is a context-specific and multidimensional concept (Silver, 2015), which means it cannot be easily measured with a one-size-fits-all approach. Given the fact that social aspects are impacted by a variety of factors, socio-spatial issues must be understood in terms of how the built environment facilitates communities to function and thrive (Akcali & Cahantimur, 2022). Applying a socio-spatial perspective to design and planning processes highlights how social functions are shaped by and simultaneously shape urban spaces (ibid.). Therefore, it is essential to contribute empirical knowledge from a real-case scenario in an urban context to gain a deeper understanding of inclusionary spaces and practices in cities. This thesis focuses on social and spatial inclusion based on Martina Löw's relational understanding of space combined with Hilary Silver's processual definition of social inclusion. The following section introduces the case under investigation and the applied research approach.

1.2 Exploring Inclusive Practices and Spaces in Potsdam

The inclusive city represents a complex issue, shaped not only by socioeconomic factors but also by political decisions. Similarly, inclusion manifests in different forms and dimensions, encompassing aspects such as spatial, social, economic, and political inclusion. More explicitly, the contextual factors of where people live significantly influence their opportunities, sense of identity, and level of social inclusion (Silver, 2015). Spatial location and site-specific analysis play a crucial role in enhancing social inclusion and its impact on local communities, engendering various concepts and dimensions of inclusion to emerge as a consequence. Therefore, it is essential to study urban spaces within their political, social, and spatial

contexts to gain a more comprehensive understanding of inclusion and exclusion in cities.

By focusing on one specific case, this study contributes to the growing discourse on inclusive urban development through offering empirical research and insights from local stakeholders and city planners striving to enhance inclusion for residents. While not directly addressing a specific research gap, the study responds to the need for more context-driven analyses of inclusive urban development, particularly in local or regional settings that have been underexplored. Through the following case study, this research project provides a nuanced examination of how inclusion functions in practice, offering detailed and practical insights that complement and enrich broader theoretical frameworks. Furthermore, it contributes to empirical grounded research expanding the knowledge on the concept of inclusion eventually improving its operability on the ground.

This master's thesis examines a specific case study on the spatial distribution of urban areas and the related social and political conflicts in Potsdam, the capital of the federal state of Brandenburg in eastern Germany. Potsdam exhibits a high degree of spatial segregation and a significant gap between affluent and financially disadvantaged populations (Helbig & Jähnen, 2018). To address this issue, Potsdam aims to reduce segregation and promote a balanced distribution of diverse population



Figure 1: The Rechenzentrum (own photograph, Potsdam, April 2024)

groups across the city through social housing subsidies (LHP, 2022a, p. 32). One of Potsdam's key goals for 2035 is to become "a city for everyone" (*Eine Stadt für Alle*), striving to be a place that fosters innovation, community, and fairness (LHP, 2022a, p. 115). Potsdam envisions itself developing into an urban space with mixed and inclusive neighborhoods (LHP, 2022a, p. 93).

By 2040, Potsdam is expected to have almost 218,000 inhabitants (LHP, 2022a) compared to the current 187,820 inhabitants (LHP, 2024). An essential component is the topic of growth, which Potsdam wants to tackle carefully, sustainably, and in a climate-friendly way (LHP, 2022a). Within the former territory of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), Potsdam is home to several buildings showcasing GDR architecture. Potsdam had a large number of state and party institutions because it was the district capital and the gateway to West Berlin during the GDR. The cityscape was remodeled or designed to conform to the socialist ideal of urban development, which in some ways mirrored the car-friendly city of postwar modernism in the West. Most of the old buildings were allowed to fall into disrepair (ibid.). One such former GDR building is the Rechenzentrum (RZ), originally used as a data center built during GDR times, which has been repurposed since 2015 as an interim socio-creative center in response to the demand of local artists to create non-profit-oriented, affordable spaces to work

As a former military and Prussian residence, the city of Potsdam is marked by deep tensions and conflicts surrounding architectural change and urban development. Since the German reunification and integration of former Soviet state land, numerous GDR-era buildings have been demolished and replaced with Prussian-style buildings to restore the city's historic image and Baroque appearance. This urban agenda, including the planned demolition of the RZ, aims to remove post-war modernist architecture and reshape Potsdam as a Prussian-style residence. (Tomczak et al., 2018)

The future of the Rechenzentrum is uncertain due to a continuous dispute with the Garrison Church Foundation, which plans to rebuild the Garrison Church at the very same location. This plan would lead to the demolition of the Rechenzentrum. In April 2024, the chapel of the planned Garrison Church was completed adjacent to the former data center, which led to demonstrations and significant criticism from local residents who reject the current city development and related future plans of Potsdam. In contrast to the Garrison Church, which with its militaristic and conservative image, the Rechenzentrum symbolizes completely different values and political orientations that can be assigned more to the left-wing political spectrum. These are political conflicts that materialize through these two buildings and the responsible

stakeholders. This thesis aims for a deeper understanding of this ongoing political conflict.

Currently the Rechenzentrum serves as a vital creative and social hub in the city, particularly for local artists, but also for social initiatives supporting more vulnerable individuals, such as refugees. The RZ is characterized by low rent, accessibility for various communities, and a focus on inclusion and integration, making it one of the last remaining spaces in the city center that is non-profit oriented. The social and creative center claims to foster integration and inclusion, making it a critical area of study for understanding the impact of inclusive urbanism in Potsdam. This thesis aims to explore and understand the inclusionary practices around the Rechenzentrum in the socio-political context of Potsdam through the following guiding research questions:

1) How does Potsdam perceive the concept of “A City for Everyone” (*Eine Stadt für Alle*) for itself, and which population groups are primarily referenced in relation to this aim?

The first research question investigates how Potsdam's city administration envisions an "inclusive city," analyzing their declared goal of A City for Everyone. This question aims to clarify Potsdam's interpretation of inclusivity and identify the social groups targeted by these efforts. By doing so, it establishes a foundational understanding of the local context and sets the conceptual framework for the study.

2) Why do social associations serving vulnerable populations affected by poverty and discrimination utilize the Rechenzentrum's spaces and collaborate with it?

The second question investigates the key factors and motivations that drive stakeholders in social inclusion to partner with the RZ, emphasizing their engagement with its physical spaces and the social dynamics within these partnerships.

3) How does the Rechenzentrum, through its work and way of distributing space, contribute to socio-spatial inclusion in Potsdam?

The third question goes beyond description to assess how the RZ's spatial allocation and organizational structure promote spatial and social inclusion, exploring the extent of their impact on a local level.

The research is conducted by using a qualitative research design and employing thematic content analysis to address the research questions. The abductive approach builds primarily on Martina Löw's relational theory of space (Löw, 2001), with a specific focus on her ideas about how spaces influence processes of inclusion and exclusion. Hilary Silver's (2015; 2010) concepts of inclusion and exclusion also play a key role in the theoretical framework, emphasizing their multidimensional nature and the relevance of contextual factors for inclusionary practices. The research adopts an explanatory case study design, semi-structured interviews, site visits, and observation, and thematic analysis of relevant documents and materials. These methods are used to analyze and interpret the findings, providing answers to the research questions while also acknowledging the study's limitations.

By applying an abductive approach, the data is first collected and analyzed without any theoretical implications. Later, the empirical findings and the theoretical implications are brought together to explain the case at hand.

The thesis is structured as follows: after this introduction, chapter 2 explains the theoretical frameworks and guiding concepts for the study. Chapter 3 outlines the methodologies employed, detailing the research design and the specific case study approach. Furthermore, chapter 4 provides a comprehensive description of the case of the Rechenzentrum in Potsdam, especially the historical and political contexts, offering an in-depth analysis of the political context surrounding the urban conflicts at the Rechenzentrum. Chapter 5 presents the study's findings, leading to Chapter 6, which concludes a discussion of the results, presenting policy recommendations.

2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this thesis is grounded in Martina Löw's relational theory of space, which is explored in detail in this chapter. To provide a solid foundation for understanding spatial concepts, the chapter begins with a brief introduction to Henri Lefebvre's conception of space, drawing on the work of the French philosopher and sociologist, who claimed that space is socially produced and shaped by power relations. Only the most relevant aspects of Lefebvre's theory are discussed before transitioning to Martina Löw's sociological approach to space and her explanation of the process of spatial constitution. Given that his ideas also played a role in Löw's work, his concept of space is briefly explained as well.

Löw's usage of the phrase "spatial constitution" defines to the process of building and structuring space rather than a political or legal constitution, a concept that is further explained in the following sections. Therefore, the chapter focuses on the key distinctions between relativistic and absolutist conceptions of space that strengthen Löw's approach. Löw's theory centers the dynamic interplay between structures, actions, and material goods, all of which play essential roles in the emergence of spaces. Löw's perspective is especially relevant for this thesis as it explains spaces significant elements inclusionary and exclusionary processes. This helps to clarify the relationships between space, societal structures, and the underlying processes that influence these dimensions, which makes it especially important in the context of the conducted case study. The presented theoretical framework serves as a lens for the thesis's abductive research approach, applying Löw's theory to the real-world context of Potsdam's Rechenzentrum.

The chapter explains the historical and political conceptions of inclusion and exclusion, and their importance within social sciences. Finally, the last part elaborates the still unclear definition of the "inclusive city" within academic. Through this theoretical exploration, this chapter critically addresses how socio-spatial processes shape urban environments, providing an analytical perspective on the interplay of social and spatial dynamics in urban settings. This approach ensures that the three research questions can be answered through theoretical and empirical findings in the end.

2.1 Understanding Space through Henri Lefebvre

Even though various sub-disciplines such as urban geography, urban sociology, and urban anthropology were established in the 20th century, space played a rather subordinate role in the social sciences. Especially, time and history were used as the

dominant categories in most classical approaches to sociology to analyze and gain insights into the changes of society. (Schmid, 2010)

But there has been a detectable change in focus from temporal to spatial problems in recent years (Elden, 2007). Urban research saw the emergence of much more empirically oriented approaches during the 1980s social science paradigm shift, which was characterized as a move from modernism to postmodernism. Space became a key concept, and the social sciences saw the emergence of the "spatial turn", in which postmodern geography was crucial. One of the main players in this discussion was the French philosopher Henri Lefebvre. (Schmid, 2010)

Rediscovered as a constituent of the social sciences' spatial turn, Lefebvre is primarily associated in the scholarly discourse with the creative phase within his work that spans the 1960s and 1970s (Illigens, 2017). The articulation of a particular historical issue that was expressed in the current discourse under the heading 'the crisis of the city' forms the basis of these works (Schmid, 2010, p. 10). The work of Henri Lefebvre was a milestone in this regard. He paved the way for critical, transdisciplinary urban study where economics, geography, sociology, and political science all evolved together over time (Schmid, 2010). Furthermore, Lefebvre examined space to explain how space is created rather than as a determinant (Roskamm, 2012). Löw's theory deepens the investigation of spatial processes, which is applied to the case of the RZ in this research project. It is particularly well-founded in his approaches to the social creation of space.

Currently, the "French Marxist philosopher" (Elden, 2007, p. 101) is being rediscovered on a large scale. Compared to other Marxist writers of his day, such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Louis Althusser, Lefebvre remains relatively unexplored (Elden, 2007). In the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, he focused on the daily life and the political-economic order of the day. The city and the search for the urban were major topics at the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s, from which the analysis of space evolved (Mullis, 2017). Lefebvre wrote most of his works on the urban between 1968 and 1974 and criticized the strong state power and rational-functionalist planning that was rooted in the social context of that era, which was closely linked at the time to state regulation and standardized mass production and consumption (Vogelpohl, 2011).

In his work, he differentiated between social and physical/natural space and emphasized, in contrast to former thinkers, that the second one loses relevance (Löw & Sturm, 2016). Lefebvre's analysis explores the relationship between social development and urban issues and formulates the thesis of the complete urbanization of society. To further explore this interrelatedness, he shifted the level of analysis and put the process of urbanization in the context of an overall societal theory category of

space, which led him to one of his best-known books: *La production de l'espace*, published in 1974 (Schmid, 2010). Lefebvre's approach to urbanism as an ideology frames urbanism as all social issues are spatial issues and gives spatial meaning to everything that originates in history and perception (Lefebvre & Schäfer, 2016). As a bridge between the private and global scales, Lefebvre characterizes the urban as a social text that projects the distant into the near order and converts different directives into orders for action without achieving coherence and ambiguity (Schmid, 2010). For Henri Lefebvre, the production of space and the production of the city are inseparable (Schmid, 2010). His concept of space is crucial to understand his ideas about the urban because it forms the basis of his description of the city. This thesis, however, focuses on the idea of space and its production processes in urban contexts, with an emphasis on how social relations shape space and how space simultaneously influences social relations in interaction.

After 25 years, Henri Lefebvre's conception of space became a fundamental component of social science knowledge, incorporating numerous ideas of famous scholars, i.e., Anthony Giddens (Löw & Sturm, 2016), who also played a decisive role in the later explained theory of space by Martina Löw. According to Lefebvre, space is the primary force influencing the development of contemporary society (Filion, 2019). Among his writings, *The Production of Space* is the most well-known and read, having been published in French in 1974 (Fuchs, 2019). He posits that individuals not only establish social bonds and social values but also create social space (Fuchs, 2019). By doing so, he builds a foundation for a new spatial theory of society (Schmid, 2010), explaining that the production of space serves as the cornerstone of constitutional processes of society as well as the manifestation of structures and processes (Mullis, 2017).

The French philosopher, in doing so, provides a framework to better grasp and understand what is meant by the production of space by offering a “conceptual triad” (Elden, 2007, p. 110). He uses a schema that unites the mental, social, and physical space (ibid.).

spatial practice	l' espace perçu	perceived	physical	materialism
representation of space	l' espace conçu	conceived	mental	idealism
spaces of representation	l' espace vécu	lived	social	materialism & idealism

Figure 2: Henri Lefebvre's conception of space (adapted by Elden, 2007, p. 110, own design)

Table 1 displays the three spatial dimensions along with the associated perceptions and the material and immaterial components. The first spatial dimension in the form of spatial practice encompasses the actual physical space, whereas the second conception is about space as a mental construct, i.e., a space that is imagined, such as in the form of maps. The third level, the lived space, is modified over time and marked with symbols and charged with meaning; these are less formal and more local forms of knowledge. (Elden, 2007)

Stuart Elden gives an example of these three spatial levels by explaining a park in more detail. A park is conceived and must first be designed and then implemented by various institutions. But the actual meaning of this space only arises from the fact that people and groups perceive and enliven it. (ibid.)

The park exemplifies how something is actively produced by people and is not simply given. The physical conditions, as well as the social processes, make the park a park. Furthermore, Lefebvre continues explaining that the perceived, conceived, and lived triad loses its force by treating it like a model. It must grasp the concrete (Lefebvre, 2011). But still, Lefebvre acknowledges the existence of physical space characterized by its materiality (Schmid, 2010). However, he firmly rejects naive materialism, which assumes that physical space alone constitutes a complete space. Instead, he argues that space is produced rather than given (Schmid, 2010). His triad model is concretely applicable to being able to empirically classify and analyze spaces. Continuing with the park example, to explore and understand the conception of space, the real objects such as trees, benches, and paths (spatial practice), the thinking of actors who plan and construct this park (representation of space), and the actors who stay in the park and enliven the park through their actions, and thus also charge it with meaning (spaces of representation), must be included.

This park could regularly be used for political protests, or, on the contrary, the park could be legally prohibited from being used for political protests and can only be used for business gatherings. Both the park's significance and its actual use would be entirely altered. A park is not defined merely by its traditional elements, such as green areas, playgrounds, and walkways. The same goes for completely asphalted areas; just because they are designated as parks does not mean that they are parks or that people think of them as such. Lefebvre's three dimensions of space allow for a more complete understanding of the park to emerge. The trees, the cognitive and planning processes to realize the park, and the daily use as well as perception of the people who animate the park are all relevant to bringing the existence of the park to life.

According to Lefebvre, only one or two levels of the spatial model are insufficient. Through Lefebvre's concepts and considerations, the complexity of space becomes clear, and the passive idea of a given space is questioned. According to him, "space

is a social and political product" (Elden, 2007, p. 107). The pivotal phrase "Right to the City" was first used by Henri Lefebvre in 1968 and has been evoked since the 1990s in the context of many social conflicts and urban struggles in cities around the world (Mullis, 2017). *Le droit à la ville* (1968), one of his most well-known works, Lefebvre presents a fundamental critique of modern and functionalist urbanism. His objective was to highlight how space reflects social structures and processes and how it is profoundly political (ibid.). He aimed to create utopias and concepts that offer an emancipatory path away from capitalism, striving towards a more equitable and free society (ibid.).

The term "urban," as perceived by Lefebvre, is basically an attack on the already outlined production of space through functional and technocratic urbanism of modernity (Vogelpohl, 2011). He claims that the urban does not only consist of something material, but it still needs a material basis (ibid.). He described the future of the city in while also analyzing societal structures. He claims that political and commercial concerns influence space in addition to the social production processes. Arguing that free and democratic involvement decreases, space is becoming increasingly regulated and commodified in capitalist society, supporting the interests of dominant groups. (Lefebvre, 1991)

He argues that privatization and control of public areas, where access is frequently limited due to political or commercial motives. Furthermore, this is demonstrated by the example of a park, which shows in which ways power and control determine whether space is used for commercial purposes or as a location for social interaction and free speech.

Lefebvre focuses on how the content of space is determined, explicitly opposing the common perspective in science that still conceptualizes space as a static container (ibid.). His political conception of space strengthens the demand for the right to the city, making it clear that "therefore, space is political" (Vogelpohl, 2018, p. 153). His ideas provide an essential foundation for understanding the dynamics of space, particularly in light of contemporary urban developments marked by expanding segregation, discrimination against marginalized groups, rising rents, a decline in democratic involvement, and the loss of open areas free from commercial pressure (Mullis, 2017). Relying on Lefebvre's approach and his relational perspective, the German sociologist Martina Löw develops a more comprehensive view of space by offering a sociological definition and processual understanding. Whereas Lefebvre emphasizes the production of space through social practices, Löw conceptualizes space as a relational arrangement of social goods and actors (Löw, 2011). Therefore, she provides a more specific and practice-oriented approach for empirical analysis of socio-spatial phenomena. The following section will explain Löw's spatial theory in

detail, including the key concepts, the spatial constitution process, and, most importantly, regarding this thesis' focus, the role of space within inclusionary and exclusionary relations.

2.2 Martina Löw's Theory of Space as a Relational Process

Martina Löw, a renowned German sociologist, has made a significant contribution, especially with her work *Raumsoziologie* (2001). She developed a sociological concept of space that grasps the connections between both the physical and social components and their interactions, which constitute space. Her ideas and approaches to space explain how social practices shape spatial structures, emphasizing the crucial societal implications of spatial dynamics. Löw's acclaimed approach explores the constitution of space through the interaction between social relations and material objects. Since space has been largely ignored in sociological theory, Löw develops a processual conceptualization of space to comprehend how spaces emerge (Löw, 2001). Therefore, she acknowledges that there are incompletely coherent theoretical concepts regarding the relationships between the different elements and phenomena of space, including actions, structures, and symbolism. To establish a sociology of space, Löw's work focuses primarily on developing a precise concept and definition of space. Given that space is concerned with the tangible arrangement of lives occurring adjacent to one another, she argues sociology needs a solid conception of space (Löw, 2001). To build a grounded sociology of space, her research attempts to develop a processual understanding of spatial dynamics. In doing so, she examines space as a combination of material and symbolic elements, defying the traditional division of sociology that distinguishes between a material and a social dimension (Löw, 2001). In order to define space as a sociological concept, the prior ideas of space that have influenced social science research must be analyzed (Löw, 2001). Because sociological conceptions of space have not evolved independently of those in the natural sciences, geography, or philosophy (Schroer, 2012a), Löw cites several thinkers, including Isaac Newton, Immanuel Kant, Albert Einstein, Georg Simmel, Elisabeth Ströker, Michel Foucault, and Dieter Läßle, to clarify the distinctions between and evolution of relativistic and absolutist conceptions of space.

To fully understand Löw's approach, it is essential to differentiate between the absolutist and relativist paradigms of space, as these form the basis for much of the sociological research on spatial dynamics (Löw, 2001). While she initially engages with space from an absolutist perspective, her sociological framework is grounded in a relativist standpoint. To provide an analysis, she explores the philosophical and historical contexts that shaped contemporary conceptions of space, explaining key ideas and theories from the relativist and absolutist understandings.

The absolutist paradigm suggests that bodies exist within spaces and that actions occur independently, implying a dualism between bodies and spaces. In this view, movements and actions take place in a static space, which is assumed to exist continuously. In contrast, the relativistic perspective posits that space arises from the arrangement of bodies. Space, in this sense, is seen as the outcome of arrangement processes that hold particular sociological relevance. Rather than being static, space is understood as a dynamic process of arrangements. According to Löw, a sociological concept of space cannot be derived from an exclusively absolutist understanding of space because this view is too limited, for instance, failing to account for virtual spaces. This interpretation compares a moving action to an immobile space. The relativist paradigm, on the other hand, emphasizes social goods, people, and how they are arranged. Given that sociology deals with social constellations, this perspective offers a more appropriate starting point than the absolutist paradigm. (Löw, 2001)

This perspective focuses on aspects that stand between things or people. The material and social intermediate elements, the relational, the relational level, so to speak, which is essential in space, are analyzed in the construction of space.

The argument over the proper interpretation of space dates back to Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz and Isaac Newton. The rigid idea of space as a kind of container, which originated in antiquity, was reinforced by Newton, who drafted an absolute idea of space that defines it as independent of bodies, meaning that space can exist without content and can be filled with different elements. Newton firmly believed that space is a naturally given state that only God has the power to alter. His conception of an absolute space was decisively shaped by writings on religious theory. His worldview was thus grounded in an idea of absolute space, which can be traced back to the Judeo-Christian creation story. Therefore, Newton's religious beliefs influenced his understanding of space. (Löw, 2001)

The alternative relational conception of space, for its part, conceives space as the possible order of existing objects at the same time. In contrast, looking at Leibniz's work, space dissolves in the relationships of objects. Decisive for the understanding of his conception of space is that the relationships between things are not independent things but rather an ideal (Hüttemann, 2004).

It is always the relation to something else that determines the position of the bodies and not the absolute (Schroer, 2012b). But most importantly, Leibniz opposes Newton's absolute and substantial conception of space and explains that the positional relations are sufficient to explain the idea of a space (Schroer, 2012b).

Not only did Newton and Leibniz devote themselves to space, but so did the philosopher Immanuel Kant. He, like Newton, adheres to Euclidean geometry¹ but rejects an infinite space, viewing it as an epistemological construct created by human imagination. Both Kant's philosophy and Newton's mechanics are based on Euclidean mathematics (Löw, 2001), though space, according to Kant, is the form of possible objects rather than an object itself. Not only space but also time is something purely descriptive (Koriako, 2004). Both Newton and Kant define space using Euclidean geometry, though Kant has a different epistemological perspective (Löw, 2001). Kant characterizes the concept of space as pure intuition since it is a basic form of all external sensations, a single conception (Dünne, 2008). He does not view space as an object in its own right but as its form of external perception (Kant cited as Löw, 2001, p. 30).

Kant does not attribute any reality of its own to space (Schroer, 2012b). Every experience is preceded by space, which has the function of ordering what is perceived (Löw, 2001). But Kant could not completely escape Newton's concept of space either, since he nevertheless assumes that we cannot imagine that there is no space. For him, space is the form of our perception (Schroer, 2012b). But mathematicians like Carl Friedrich Gauss laid the groundwork for non-Euclidean geometry. Initially, these ideas were confronted with skepticism and confusion. However, not long after, Albert Einstein demonstrated that the universe itself does not follow Euclidean geometry, and his revolutionary insights into space continue to influence how several social scientists conceptualize spatial relationships today. (Löw, 2001)

Einstein significantly influenced how the social sciences interpret space, seeking to establish a unity of space and matter, but Einstein and his colleagues did not constitute an entirely new concept of space (Löw, 2001). Moreover, Einstein insisted that velocity is not absolute and must be considered in connection to other bodies and that space is related to the observer's respective reference system (Schroer, 2012b). His ideas emphasize that spatial relationships are never static but are always in motion, in contrast to Newton's rigid view of space (Löw, 2001). Einstein overcame this idea, combining space, time, and matter into a dynamic continuum and introducing the gravitational field, which renders space and time indistinguishable (Löw, 2001). He considers the positional relationships that form a space to be able to

¹Euclidean geometry is a mathematical system that studies the properties and relationships of flat shapes, such as points, lines, and angles, based on a set of axioms proposed by the ancient Greek mathematician Euclid. It focuses on the concepts of size and shape while disregarding aspects like position, orientation, and mirror image distinctions of these shapes. (Izard et al., 2022)

move freely (Löw, 2001). As a result, this new understanding of space and time removed the scientific foundation for the idea of an absolute space. Albert Einstein's theory of relativity sparked a new discourse on space, but the essential steps have long ago been taken; an actual break with this conception of space has not yet occurred in the social sciences, in spite of Einstein's conclusive break with the container space model (Schroer, 2012b).

Building on this new approach of space, which slowly but surely questioned the container space idea, Löw takes a critical look and engages with the historical evolution of the concept of space in sociology, rejecting the notion of space as fixed and absolute while instead emphasizing its processual and relational nature. Her theoretical framework builds upon the foundational contributions of Anthony Giddens, Georg Simmel, and Dieter Läßle. The emergence of non-Euclidean geometry, along with the recognition that Euclidean geometry represents an idealized perspective rather than an absolute truth, opened the way for alternative principles of spatial order. (Löw, 2001)

While Simmel, like Kant and Newton, maintained a belief in absolute space and Euclidean geometry, he distanced himself from the spatial determinism prevalent in political geography at the time (Löw & Sturm, 2006).

Löw critically examines Simmel's work, incorporating elements of his ideas into the development of her theory. Simmel's sociology of space plays a crucial role in shaping the social-scientific understanding of space. In 1903, he explored various theoretical considerations related to space (Dünne, 2008), marking a shift from pre-modern to modern spatial concepts while moving away from essentialist perspectives (Löw & Sturm, 2006). He recognized that spaces do not exist independently but materialize, such as in the form of territories, through the collective actions of social groups (Löw, 2001). These interactions produce pre-structured social forms that shape spatial arrangements. But Löw also highlights that Simmel perceived space as a self-evident fact (Simmel, cited in Löw, 2001, p. 58). Georg Simmel's studies of space represent the aim to examine how human activity creates space as well as how spatial arrangements impact human activity (Schroer, 2012b). However, for Simmel, space is an ineffective form (Löw, 2001) that only gains significance when individuals apply it to their material world. His conclusions remain rooted in an Euclidean framework, which assumes the existence of an overarching spatial order (Löw, 2001). But crucially, Simmel's approach recognizes the importance of synthesis². Unlike Newton, who perceived space as a physical reality, or Kant, who regarded it as a purely

² Through bodily perception, people create syntheses in everyday activities, linking together a multitude of objects to form spaces (Löw & Sturm, 2006). The in-depth explanation about the process of synthesis follows in chapter 2.1.1.

conceptual idea, Simmel highlights the role of social interactions in shaping space (Löw & Sturm, 2006). Compared to Kant, Simmel emphasizes that space is important as a formal condition, but not as a cause of socialization processes. Thus, the preoccupation with space serves the goal of uncovering the social impact factors. (Ahrens, 2008)

Simmel is without any doubt one of the thinkers who has dealt most with the topic of space in sociology (Schroer, 2012b). According to him, it is solely through social organization that the organization of space becomes perceptible (Dünne, 2008). For him, space is not the origin of socialization processes, but it provides the framework in which these events could take place or would be perceptible (Schroer, 2012b). He sees social relations as crucial for the construction of space, both physically and in his imagination. For example, agreeing on territorial borders can happen through social and communicative processes, without which there could otherwise be walls, fences, and borders, for example, but without acceptance, these would not mark territory (Löw, 2001).

Simmel makes it clear that space only acquires its meaning through its arrangements and interactions, which, as knowledge, provide a foundation for a relational understanding of space (Ahrens, 2008). In the context of the debate on space as a social science subject, Simmel offers decisive considerations, if only through the realization that space itself serves as a cause; it is not a pre-social category but something social that is socially configured and has a retroactive effect on the social (Schroer, 2012b). In addition to Simmel's sociological and relational understanding of space, there are also statements by him oriented towards Euclidean geometry (ibid.). But Einstein and his colleagues, especially his wife Mileva Einstein-Maric, redefined the concept of space and did not use Euclidean geometry for their research (Löw, 2001).

Following on from Simmel's understanding of space and its social and spatial implications, Löw continues her critical examination and explains Dieter Läßle's concept of space that expanded the understanding of space and initiated a new spatial debate in Germany (Löw & Sturm, 2016). In his 1991 published work *Essay über den Raum*, Dieter Läßle builds upon earlier analyses of the ignorance of the spatial dimension of the social sciences (Läßle, 1991) and develops new points of connection to form a concept of societal spaces (Läßle, 1991). Läßle further developed the concept of relational space of order, which he refers to as "matrix space" (Löw, 2001). With its four different dimensions, Läßle's matrix space (Figure 1) presented here offers the possibility of a better understanding of social spaces. He argues that there is a need for an expanded concept of space that explains spaces in terms of their social function and developmental context. This concept comprises four key components: first, the material's physical substrate, which describes the material dimension of space. Second, the social structures of interaction and action,

considering class and power relations, encompass the usage, appropriation, and social practice of space production. Third, the institutionalized and normative regulatory system mediates between the appearance of a space and actual spatial practice. Fourth, a spatial system of signs, symbols, and representations, which involves the composition of space and prestructures spatial behavior. (Läpple, 1991).

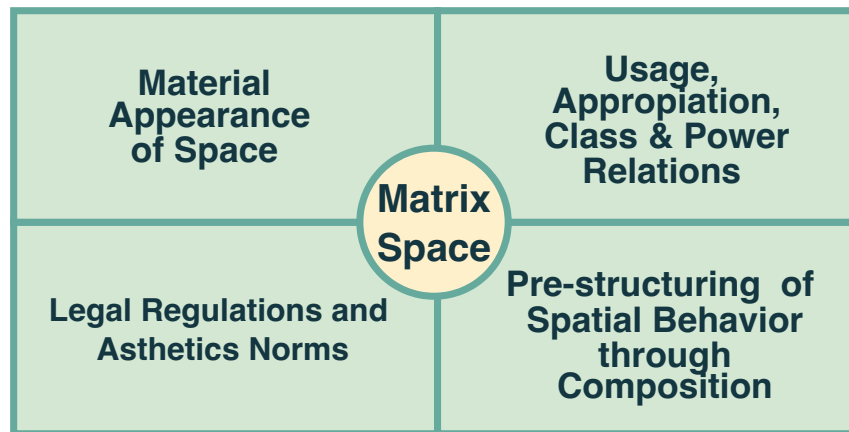


Figure 3: Läpple's Matrix of Space (adapted by Läpple, 1991, p. 194 ff., own design)

Figure 1 illustrates the matrix space developed by Läpple, which is divided into four different dimensions. But these are only the components of the matrix space. The relationships between the dimensions are missing, which is why only four adjacent forms can be visualized. The developed matrix space serves to overcome the purely physical, material understanding of space and specifies the complex facets and factors in a social context.

"As a result of the material appropriation of nature, a social space is initially a socially produced space. However, it only develops its social character in the context of the social practice of the people who live in it, use it and reproduce it. This immediate social dimension also explains its character as a 'matrix space', i.e. a space that shapes and structures itself." (Läpple, 1991, p. 197, own translation)

Nevertheless, Martina Löw criticizes a gap in Läpple's explanation of his model (Löw, 2001). Läpple argues that space is not immediately perceptible but rather a complex process composed of selection, interpretation, and synthesis (Läpple, 1991). This means that the human synthesis performance is brought into context and then space is created (Läpple, 1991). Löw points out that the decisive question, if space is both a social construction and matter, is how one dimension relates to the other (Löw, 2001). The relationship between the material dimension and synthesis remains an open question in academia (Löw, 2001). Läpple argues that this relationship is established through an institutionalized and normative regulatory system, which he refers to as the third component of his matrix space (Läpple, 1991).

He conceptualizes these regulatory systems as overarching control mechanisms that govern social groups and classes, positioning them above individual action. Löw,

however, critiques his perspective, arguing that norms do not hold uniform validity for all individuals. She highlights the reciprocal relationship between regulation and action, emphasizing that while regulatory systems influence human behavior, actions also play a role in shaping these systems. Furthering her critique, Löw contends that Läßle does not sufficiently account for the dynamic interactions between action and structure. She states that social structures are not simply determinants of action but are continuously reshaped through it. She expands the discussion beyond class relations, emphasizing the role of other social characteristics, such as ethnicity and gender, in the constitutional process of space. (Löw, 2001)

Löw's theoretical framework offers a significant contribution to the spatial discourse by exploring the relationship between spaces as both material objects and human creations, or whether these spaces require construction in the first place. In essence, Löw's theory poses a crucial question: How does the material relate to the created space? Her approach to a relational understanding of space marks a departure from the historically dominant absolutist paradigm, as evidenced by her rejection of the notion that space is given and her emphasis on the role of social structures in shaping and being shaped by action. She challenges the conventional understanding of space as given, emphasizing its role as an independent sociological category. In her approach, she emphasizes that the constitution of space must be comprehended as a dynamic process rather than a static object. (ibid.)

Her main hypothesis states that spaces are relative arrangements of bodies³ (Löw, 2001). The term "arrangements" is used in this work to translate Löw's term "(An)Ordnungen". In this thesis, the term is consistently written as "arrangements." She employs this notation to emphasize the dual nature of space: on the one hand, it is shaped by social structures that create order, and on the other hand, it involves an active process of arranging (Löw, 2001). By examining the process of spatial constitution from a sociological, physical, and philosophical perspective, Löw creates a thorough sociology of space that focuses on the production of spaces. She exceeds the binary opposition of material and social space and highlights the processual aspect of spatial emergence. Drawing attention to the fact that many analyses fall short in taking into consideration the circumstances that underly the process of spatial constitution (Löw, 2001).

This processual and dynamic understanding of space guides this case study throughout its research design and interpretation of the results. The Rechenzentrum

³ „Bodies“ in this sense context does not refer to the human body explicitly. The term is much broader and can also include material and physical entities.

as a space can not only be examined not with regard to its material or social aspects if the aim is to develop a deeper understanding of the connections between the actions of the actors and their interactions with the RZ as an institution. Yet, the research interest does indeed focus on the social implications, as it focuses in particular on social inclusion and exclusion, but the material components of the RZ are integrated into the interpretation as well to maintain a socio-spatial perspective. This means that the material and spatial conditions to which the interviewees are subject form a component that aids in understanding the social and spatial inclusion and exclusion processes in connection with the RZ.

2.2.1 Constituting Space between Structures and Actions

As mentioned, Löw's sociological understanding of space, or more specifically, her spatial theory, builds upon the theoretical frameworks of important social scientists. Her explanation and analysis of the formation and structure of space are based on their ideas, and in order to comprehend Löw's concept of space and the process of spatial constitution, this subchapter presents the fundamental ideas and theories. Presenting these conceptions briefly is intended to facilitate a deeper comprehension of the construction and transformation of space in social contexts.

Löw's initial assumption views space as a relational arrangement of bodies that are subject to continuous change. This refers not only to human bodies but also to material objects such as chairs, walls, or windows, whose arrangement also constitutes space (Löw, 2001). To strengthen her argument, Löw draws on the ideas of sociologist Reinhard Kreckel for a more precise categorization of social goods.

Kreckel defines social goods as products of human action. These are products of the present but especially of the past. He refers here to symbolic as well as material action. This is how he comes to the distinction between primarily material and primarily symbolic goods, which can be unevenly distributed. (Kreckel, 2004) Physical objects are such things as tables and chairs, while symbolic goods are more abstract concepts such as songs, values, or rules (Löw, 2001).

However, Löw emphasizes that social goods always have both a material and a symbolic dimension, which are not only physically arranged but must also be understood in terms of their meaning. Although she uses the term social goods primarily for material objects, she consciously integrates their symbolic component as well. Similar to Löw's understanding of space, both the material and social dimensions are considered and integrated together and not conceived separately or as opposites. According to her, social goods are essential components of spaces, and the relational arrangement of social goods can be defined as space. (Löw, 2001)

The material and symbolic levels are once again connected here with reference to Kreckel in order to form a concept of space that does not see either one singular dimension but rather a kind of interplay. This basis helps with the later perspective on the case study examined, which must be explained both in its material distribution and its symbolic or social level of action. To this end, it is also necessary to involve the actors in the analysis, where Löw also offers explanations on the role of people in the process of constituting space. People actively position themselves through their actions and make conscious decisions, thereby directly shaping the spatial constitution process. Humans not only position themselves but can also leave these positions again. However, people are not only actors who arrange objects in space - they are an integral part of space. At the same time, social goods, although they do not have the same power of decision and action as people, also have an influence on spatial constructions - for example, through sounds or smells. In order to analyze spaces, both the individual elements and the relationships between them must be considered. It is only through this composition and their interactions that space is constituted. (Löw, 2001)

Since only the connected social goods and people become space, theoretical attention must be paid to the formation of relations. Both the elements and their relationships are relevant. Löw refers to the French philosopher Pierre Bourdieu and refers to his demand to think relationally and not to place the study of elements above the study of relational structures, which she also strengthens with her approach. A room or a city, for example, can be seen as a social good as part of the constitution of space, but such a good can also be understood as a space in its own right, depending on the perspective. For example, a district can be seen as a separate space, or it can form an element of a space, e.g., an entire city. (Löw, 2001)

It becomes clear that contexts and perspectives significantly influence what or who is considered a space. Löw places the various elements and their existing relationships on one level instead of arranging them hierarchically. This approach forms the basis for a well-founded analysis of spatial processes, which always considers the interplay of different components.

In her theory, Löw looks at various aspects of spatial design that are crucial to the creation and understanding of space. She emphasizes that spaces are created by linking people and things together, both in everyday life and in science and art. In deepening this understanding, it is important to make a systematic distinction between the arrangement and the arranged. When spaces are created, processes of placement happen, and Löw focuses on the pre-structured conditions under which

these placements take place. (Löw, 2001) In doing so, she manages to avoid an isolated approach and instead also includes the contexts of the spatial constitution process. In order to explain the process of spatial constitution, she distinguishes between two central processes: spacing and synthesis. Spacing describes the process of placing and constructing social goods and people in space. This process is characterized not only by the physical placement of objects and people but also by the continuous movement and relations between these placements. (Löw, 2001) Each placement has both a material and a symbolic dimension (Löw, 2001). Thus, both the snapshot of the placement and the movement to the next placement are important. This dynamic view of space is decisive for Löw, as it reflects the constant rearrangement of space through actions. (Löw, 2001)

Furthermore, Löw emphasizes that places and spaces should not be equated, as places are the result of placements and, as such, play a fundamental role in the creation of space. They are concrete, nameable entities that are created through the process of spacing, i.e., the placement of elements. This distinction is essential because places are the result and goal of the placement process. Thus, a space can only be perceived as a coherent whole through the combination of physical and symbolic space, through conscious perception and memory. Here, too, Löw emphasizes the importance of synthesis, as it makes it possible to combine different elements - people, goods, and actions- into a space that can be experienced in its entirety. (Löw, 2001)

Furthermore, Löw distinguishes between three types of synthesis: perception, memory, and imagination. In experience, places and the goods associated with them are often not perceived separately, which illustrates the close connection between these elements, as for example, the case of a house in New York, where the location of the house and the house itself are inextricably linked in memory. Memory and perception are inextricably linked to elements such as places and goods. These cognitive processes operate simultaneously, enabling the combination of different elements, be they people, social goods, or events, into a coherent spatial experience. As a result, a space can only be understood as a cohesive whole through the combination of physical and symbolic space, facilitated by conscious perception and memory. Synthesis is thus a critical concept, as it allows for the integration of diverse elements like people, goods, and actions into a space that can be fully experienced. (Löw, 2001)

Additionally, Löw discusses the potentiality of spaces, which can evoke and influence emotions in an atmosphere created by the arrangement of people and goods. The interaction between people and arranged social goods plays a critical role in shaping

the atmosphere of a space. These atmospheres, in turn, influence the perception and social order of spaces. She explains that atmospheres are the external outcome of social goods and people realized within their spatial arrangement (ibid.).

For Löw, actions play a central role in the constitution of space. *"Spaces emerge through actions and through the linking of placing/building/storing etc"* (Löw, 2001, p. 160, own translation). For a more precise explanation of this component, she refers to the British sociologist Anthony Giddens. He formulated a theory of structuring and developed the concept of a duality of structure around a dynamic relationship between actions and structures that mutually condition and oppose each other (Mitterlechner, 2024). In order to understand this connection, it is first necessary to clarify the concept of structure, which Löw draws on per Giddens' structural theory. "According to my thesis, the spatial cannot be distinguished from the social but is rather a specific form of the social" (Löw, 2001, p. 167, own translation). Giddens describes structures not as static conditions but as dynamic rules and resources that shape the actions of individuals and, at the same time, are continuously reproduced by these actions. He refers to this as the duality of structure and action: structures enable action but are at the same time shaped and maintained by repeated social practices. According to Giddens, structures consist of two central elements: rules and resources. Rules are norms and regulations that guide and sanction social practices, while resources, which can be either material (e.g., economic means) or symbolic (e.g., social power), are necessary for action. (Löw, 2001)

Spatial structures manifest themselves in action and at the same time influence this action. Giddens' concept of duality shows that spaces are created through repeated actions and are anchored in institutions. These structures control actions and can either facilitate or hinder cooperation between people. However, actions are not limited to just one structural variant. Economic, political, and legal structures play an important role in shaping the constitution of space. Thus, the social structure results from the interaction of different structures, which can also lead to contradictions. (Löw, 2001)

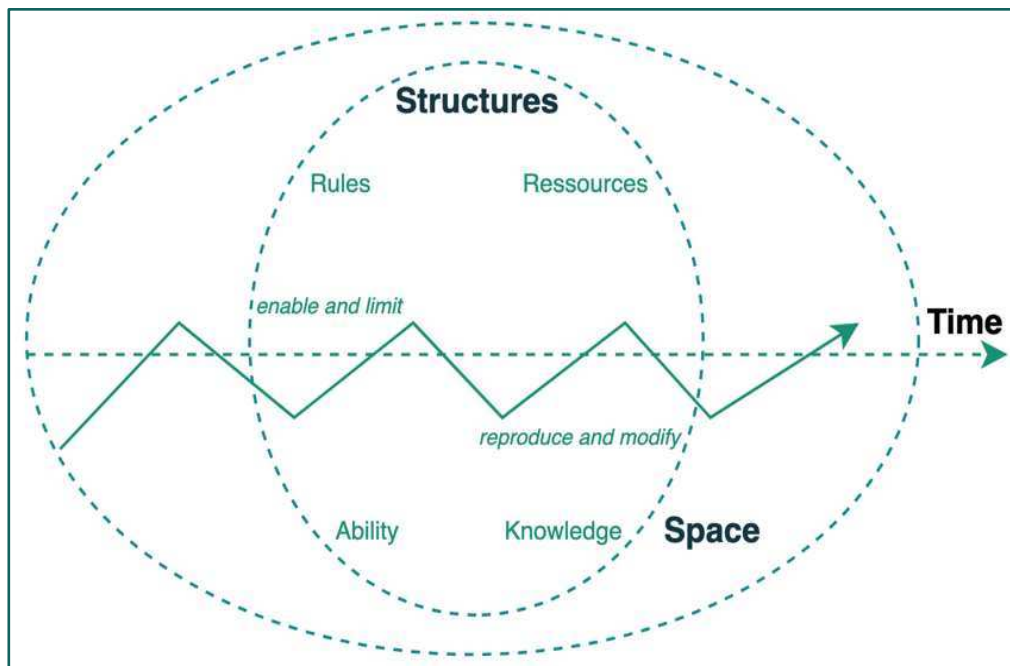


Figure 4: Anthony Giddens' structuring process (adapted from Zerfuß, 2009, p. 39, own design)

Löw's adoption of Giddens' structuration theory makes it clear that space does not function as a mere arena for action. Rather, space is formed by actions that structure it. At the same time, space has an influence on societal and social structures, which results in an interaction between space and action. Löw understands structures detached from place and time. Similar to political or economic structures, they are a form of structural variant. These structures are reproduced through repetitive practices and anchored in institutions. When spaces permanently shape action, one speaks of institutionalized spaces. (Löw, 2001)

This separation can also be manifested in other structures that are recursive and isolable, such as economic structures (gainful employment in public spaces and unpaid housework at home) or in different rules and laws that apply to different spaces. The spatial dimension also plays a role in this fundamental distinction: different spaces are accessible in different ways. Private homes are locked, while cafes are open to the public. Depending on these spatial structures, there are different ways of carrying out actions (ibid.)

The connection to the process of spatial constitution results from Löw's assumption that spaces are created through actions. Since these actions often take place routinely, they contribute to the continuing reproduction of social structures. These structures, in turn, influence the possibilities of action of individuals and determine the extent to which space-constituting action is possible at all. (ibid.)

Although Giddens agrees that society and culture do impact human behavior, he dismisses the common trap of other structural theories to write people off that they have their own individual power of making. Rather, he assumes that social structure

plays a dual role, functioning both as a medium and as a result of actions. These social structures, in turn, can restrict as well as enable action. Consequently, the structures are not external conditions but something that exists in people's imaginations. (Bachmann & Moist, 2024)

Löw integrates Giddens' theory of structuration into her explanation of the process of the constitution of space, including his reflections on human consciousness. Giddens distinguishes between a so-called discursive and a practical consciousness (Giddens, 1984). The discursive consciousness comprises the explicit knowledge of one's own actions and the ability to reflect on and explain them. On the other hand, there is practical consciousness, which comprises routinized, often unconsciously performed actions. Practical consciousness plays a particularly important role in the constitution of space, as people rarely talk explicitly about how they create or structure spaces. (Löw, 2001)

Nevertheless, they can verbalize these processes and transform them into a discursive consciousness, for example, when they are asked to reflect on their spatial actions. In certain situations, a connection is thus created between the two states of consciousness, whereby unconscious spatial practices can be made conscious and reflected upon. (ibid.)

Löw argues that social structures are reproduced through routines that play a central role in the constitution of space. Meanwhile, she emphasizes that such repetitive actions take place under pre-structured conditions and that spaces are constituted by these recurring actions of individuals (Löw, 2001). Routines stabilize not only the social order but also the space in which these structures manifest themselves (Löw, 2001). This is because actions usually take place in repetitive patterns that are mediated by social practices and institutions.

Thus, routines convey a sense of security, and these habitual actions recursively reproduce social structures. Institutions are also explained in this way, since social institutions are also reproduced through routines (ibid.).

Institutions are structures that are permanently reproduced in routines and constitute central features of social life (ibid.). They play a decisive role because structures are embedded in them. An institution can appear as a form of social behavior or as a social, organizational structure. Institutionalized spaces, such as courts, are characterized by the fact that their order is effective beyond individual action and establishes general rules for placements and interactions. In these spaces, power relations are decisive, as they influence the constitution of the space; for example, judges and defendants experience the space differently due to their respective positions of power. (Löw, 2001)

A courtroom has clear specifications for the seating of judges, defendants, and other participants, which define the social structure of the space. The processes of spacing and synthesis create a space that is characterized by specific rules and social

hierarchies. These rules are institutionalized; it is clear who sits where and how the participants arrange themselves. This applies not only to a single court but to all courts in Germany. In routine procedures, the courtroom is repeatedly arranged in the same way, and the corresponding positions are taken by the people (Löw, 2001). In this context, the importance of the legal framework also becomes clear: it directly influences how people behave in court and which norms and rules they accept and follow. At the same time, they all accept the institutionalized order. (ibid.)

The example of the courtroom also illustrates the power dimension of space, which Löw explains with reference to Michel Foucault's thesis that spatial arrangements are always linked to practices of power. Here, Löw introduces Foucault's concept of heterotopias. These are places that are related to other places and at the same time mirror or question them. One example is the so-called heterotopias of deviance spaces in which people who deviate from social norms are housed, such as hospitals or psychiatric wards. Similar to a mirror, heterotopias reflect the outside of society without being completely part of it: you recognize yourself in them, but at the same time, you are in a different place. According to Löw, such power relations, which not only influence people's actions but also shape the meaning and experience of spaces, are inextricably linked to the material and symbolic dimensions of space. However, Löw criticizes the fact that Foucault does not make a clear distinction between space and place in his concept, a differentiation that is of central importance for the understanding of space. This distinction will be discussed in more detail later. Löw builds an action-theoretical framework that is intended to clearly show that space is created in processes of actions and that these in turn, are embedded in structures. Her approach is characterized, among other things, by the fact that she does not distinguish the social from the spatial. (Löw, 2001)

Specifically, the Rechenzentrum case study explored in this thesis may be investigated on several levels utilizing Löw's theoretical framework because it is an urban place that challenges several social institutions in its operations. This centrally located space in a highly divided city is being communally appropriated without being motivated by consumption or profit, which puts urban political and economic processes to the test. Analytical tools for placing the RZ into larger urban spatial dynamics are provided by Löw's idea of spatial constitution. Additionally, by providing programs for underrepresented groups and allocating space according to a range of requirements through an advisory board that is democratically formed, the RZ actively shapes social inclusion and exclusion. Chapters 4 and 5 will delve deeper into these topics. This conversation emphasizes how important it is to consider the underlying social processes that influence the constitution of space in any investigation. The issue of who can access space and

who cannot be inextricably linked to more general methods of inclusion and exclusion, which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

2.2.2 Space as a Mechanism of Inclusion and Exclusion

In the early 1990s, the British geographer and social scientist Doreen Massey argued that much of the social science literature still conceived space as a stationary opposition to time, to which dynamic attributes are assigned (Massey, 1993, p. 118). This dichotomous way of thinking based on categorical distinctions is also linked to the stark distinction between the sexes, including the characteristics assigned to genders and the existing power relations. And indeed, most of the literature neglects space, much like women in Western culture tend to be defined as deficient in comparison. However, it is not a matter of arguing that space is an essentially male conception but of the fact that the conceptualization of space reflects and, with all its associations, is also part of the constitution of femininity and masculinity in a sexist society. But Massey argues for a conceptualization of space that conceives in terms of mutual relations and does not understand time and space as entities, since spatial organization is part of history (Massey, 1993)

Massey's reflections on the relationship between the conceptualizations of space, time, and gender draw a similar critique of an overly simplistic concept of space as in the prevailing concept of container space. Rather, their arguments plead for a combination of space and time (ibid.) similar to Einstein's, but not with necessarily physical representations. The role of gender and sexism in connection with space is also part of Löw's view and context of the spatial constitutional process.

Löw emphasizes that the structural principles of class and gender permeate all levels of spatial constitution, contributing to both the emergence and systematic reproduction of social advantages and disadvantages. Beyond these dimensions, institutionalized discrimination further exacerbates social inequalities, disadvantaging certain groups based on ethnic or religious affiliation, sexual orientation, or physical and mental abilities. (Löw, 2001)

Löw is using Reinhard Kreckel's conception of structural social inequality to substantiate her statements on the spatial constitution process. Reinhard Kreckel defines structural social inequality as a condition in which individuals or groups experience sustained advantages or disadvantages over generations. Furthermore, he argues that structural social inequality can manifest itself in asymmetrical relationships between people or in the unequal distribution of goods. The relationships between people in an asymmetrical way are about a relational form of dependencies, domination, and discrimination, and the unequal distribution of goods

is mainly about the fact that wealth and knowledge are not equally distributed. (Kreckel, 2004)

However, he summarizes that these two different types of inequality are both strategic resources. Strategic resources, in turn, are divided into four different categories: symbolic knowledge, selective association, material wealth, and hierarchical organization. (ibid.)

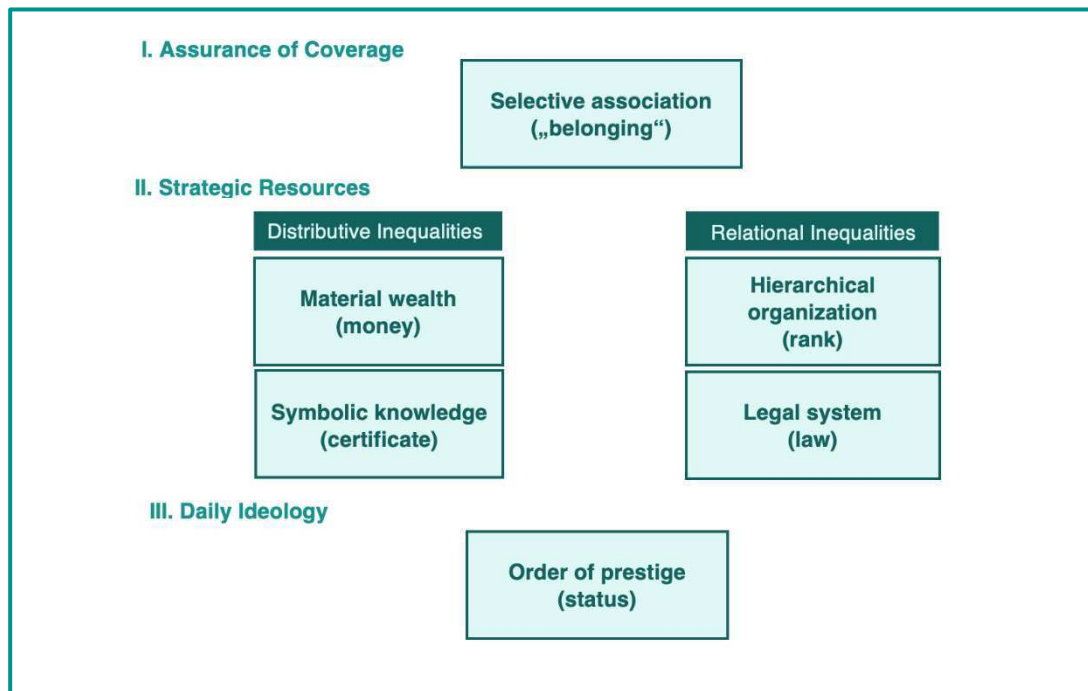


Figure 5: Social inequality by Kreckel (adapted from Kreckel, 2004, p. 94, own design)

The wealth dimension is particularly concerned with inequality in terms of access to primarily material goods and the conditions of human work, both in the present time and in the past, and how these are regulated in an asymmetrical way, thus giving unequal possibilities for action and shaping of life. The role of how this unequal distribution is institutionally but also ideologically secured also plays a role. (Kreckel, 2004)

But just as there can be an unequal distribution of material goods, there can also be an unequal distribution of symbolic goods, even if the scarce availability of symbolic goods is more difficult to imagine than material ones (Kreckel, 2004). For example, access to educational institutions can be limited and, similar to money, helps to dispose of certain goods, the knowledge dimension can be based on the testimony that the disposal of knowledge can make possible (Kreckel, 2004).

The third dimension, the hierarchical organization, is about the fact that the position that a person holds, whether in a company or even a school, is the broader the possibilities of that person to determine the actions of another position. But this power of disposal applies to a certain substructure and is limited to certain areas, which is why Kreckel does not find it appropriate to speak of a distribution of power within a

society. Similar to money and references, rank acts as a socially recognized element that is used to quickly agree on these positions. (Kreckel, 2004).

However, both wealth, knowledge, and hierarchical organization can be seen as isolated dimensions of inequality, as they interact. A person who owns capital and wants to gain more of it, needs certain access, to actually increase it. Owning the money is not enough. The person must know how to increase his money, or he must learn where he comes to this knowledge. And depending on the rank of this person in which institution, this results in a wide variety of possible courses of action. A manager of a firm who occupies the highest rank within the company will enjoy different access, types of knowledge, rank privileges, and material wealth compared to a CEO of a bank. Kreckel proposes to understand asymmetrical relationships between people as a phenomenon of hierarchy when analyzing unequal relationships. In particular, Kreckel emphasizes the role of hierarchical relationships in the private sector, the public sector, and large public companies. (ibid.)

The situation is different with selective association, the fourth dimension of inequality, where relationships between persons who recognize each other in the same way are intertwined, which can lead to a consolidation of unequal relations in society through the exclusivity of these like-minded people. Kreckel defines this dimension quite broadly, as he is concerned with the general exclusivity of interpersonal relationships and the exclusion of those who are not treated equally by them, who do not belong. Here, too, these interpersonal relationships can have a material component, such as when you get money through marriage or friends lend money to each other. This also creates other access to resources and thus other life opportunities and privileges. (ibid.)

However, in comparison to the other three dimensions of inequality already explained, there are legal and illegal ways to access these resources. Selective association takes place in particular in the private sphere of life and tends not to happen publicly. There is no such clear medium of exchange as a certificate, for example, but in everyday life, characteristics such as skin color, gender, or lifestyle can still be used as indicators for the respective membership of a certain group. (Kreckel, 2004)

Kreckel's four dimensions of inequality are by no means to be understood only as constructs, since each dimension has its medium of exchange, as explained above (Kreckel, 2004). These dimensions and exchange media are also of essential importance for Löw and her explanations and analyses of the constitution of space.

In her analysis of the constitution of space, Löw distinguishes four different levels, or rather makes use of the 4 divisions of social inequality according to Kreckel. Low possibilities of disposal (wealth dimension), low or broad knowledge (knowledge dimension), opportunities due to low or higher social position (rank dimension), and

the chance to constitute space due to belonging or non-belonging (association dimension). (Löw, 2001)

Those who have money, certificates, rank, or associations can enforce orders and design spaces. At the same time, the disposal of space itself can become a resource. The constitution of space thus directly influences social inclusion and exclusion mechanisms. Regarding Kreckel, Löw explains that action always arises depending on the situation. Social action has both a symbolic and a material dimension. The symbolic dimension includes behaviors that are guided by values and norms, while the material dimension is determined by the interaction between actors and their environment. For example, the material of a staircase influences how it is perceived as a space. Löw emphasizes that space is constituted in the interaction between action and structures. These arrangements are socially pre-structured, and the possibilities of constituting space depend on the given symbolic and material conditions. These conditions significantly shape the situation of action. (Löw, 2001)

Additionally, she explains the main structural principles of society and space through the examples of gender and class. Men and higher classes thus have more advantageous possibilities of constituting space. Furthermore, different knowledge spectrums, hierarchical organizations, and selective associations in the form of, e.g., rank, class, gender, or even one's residential area, have different types of access options. Löw argues that the opportunities for access to social goods are asymmetrically distributed, so that not everyone can constitute space to the same extent (Löw, 2001)

In conclusion, it becomes clear that space is always linked to social inequality, as it produces both inclusion and exclusion effects. Löw refers to the importance of the distribution of social goods and their influence on the constitution of space. The possibility of constituting space is not equally distributed and depends strongly on social and economic factors (ibid.). In this respect, it is evident that the constitution of space is not only to be understood as a social process but also as a process of social confrontation in which different actors compete for access to and control of space. "Through the production of society-specific spaces organize the exclusion (and sometimes also the inclusion) of members of other societies" (Löw, 2001, p. 215). With regard to the spatial constitution process, institutionalized connections – i.e., constantly repeated orders – are crucial for the reproduction of social inequality. The principle of distribution plays a central role in this. Löw describes that inclusion and exclusion are always shaped by the constitution of space. (Löw, 2001)

In addition to Giddens and Kreckel, Martina Löw also relies on the French philosopher Pierre Bourdieu to explain the relationship between structure, action, and social space

in the further development of her comprehensive theory. Bourdieu also describes social space as a relational order of people who are in a constant struggle for distribution and thus in constant motion. Social space is an abstraction – a metaphor – while physical space is both socially appropriated and geographically determined. Social space is reflected in physical space by leading to certain distributions. (Löw, 2001)

The class position, i.e., the position in social space, shapes the constitution of space. However, Bourdieu does not go into further detail about the interactions, as Löw criticizes. The structuring effect of spaces is not considered in his considerations, as is the question of how spaces themselves are constituted. According to Bourdieu, the social world can present itself in the form of a multidimensional space, which is subject to certain distribution principles (Bourdieu, 2016). Social space for him is characterized by immaterial relations that reproduce themselves within the physical space through the distribution of configurations of things and individuals (Bourdieu, 2016). He contrasts the metaphorically meant social space with the physical space and explains that the social space forces the physical space to make certain arrangements in terms of distribution. For example, it would be possible to determine a person's class affiliation via the apartment, although it is precisely these reified social structures that are the reason why social structures do not change quickly (Löw, 2001).

Löw agrees with Bourdieu and agrees that the position of people in social space, i.e., class affiliation, influences the constitution of space. Nevertheless, she criticizes the fact that Bourdieu is not able to examine the interrelations between the social and the spatial, since he uses an absolutist concept of space for the appropriated space. His reflections on the relationality of relationships do not go so far that he can also think of space relationally. (ibid.)

Following Pierre Bourdieu as a theoretician of the relational, she emphasizes that people create structures that cannot exist independently of them. Class and gender invade all areas of life and, according to Martina Löw, are also directly connected to the body, which is often the focus of spatial constructions. For her, these two structures function not only as some structures, but these two are the main structural principles. Gender and class are structural principles that go hand in hand with oppression and social inequality. Social structural principles such as gender and class are not simply given but are recursively generated in everyday behavior and constantly reproduced through routinized practices (Löw, 2001)

Löw uses Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus to illustrate the social inscription in the body. The habitus is a permanent system of perception, evaluation, and action patterns based on the structural principles of gender and class. These principles significantly influence how people evaluate and perceive their environment. Value

orientations and normative patterns, therefore, do not exist in a vacuum but are deeply rooted in social inequalities. Structures influence lives of people, as they are closely linked to physicality - they are not only thought or known but physically experienced and lived. This is not just about habits but about embodied social order. Löw concludes by emphasizing that space is to be understood as a relational arrangement of goods and living beings - an arrangement that does not arise by chance but is the result of social practices through which certain structures are institutionalized and reproduced (Löw, 2001).

In the case study examined in this research work, it also becomes clear at the beginning of the field phase that it is a society-specific space that is consciously shaped and arranged by people. The thinking of social structures in the form of discrimination and the question of who experiences exclusion is partly reflected in practices and the distribution structures of the RZ. The Rechenzentrum is a space and not just a place, an essential distinction that Löw explains. In this context, Löw distinguishes between place and space and emphasizes that places are concrete, nameable elements, while space is created by placing these elements with each other. Places are therefore not identical with spaces but represent the result and goal of placement. This distinction is of significant importance because it is closely related to the process of constitution or synthesis, which is necessary for the constitution of space. (Löw, 2001)

Löw describes three different types of synthesis that concern the perception, memory, and imagination of space and shows how these processes contribute to the constitution of space. This distinction between place and space and the emphasis on synthesis as the key to the constitution of space makes that space must be understood as a dynamic interplay of physical, social, and cultural aspects. (ibid.)

According to Löw, space is both a social and material construct, and her theories form the foundation of the abductive approach used in this qualitative single-case study. This framework guides the formulation of hypotheses, assessment, and critical discussion of findings, particularly concerning the socially unequal distribution of space and its role in the inclusion and exclusion of less privileged groups. Löw emphasizes that spaces inherently produce distributions (Löw, 2001), which, in hierarchically organized societies, often result in inequalities that favor certain groups. As a result, space becomes a site of social conflict, where access to resources such as money, credentials, status, or networks determines the ability to shape spatial arrangements. Conversely, the control over space itself can serve as a resource, influencing power dynamics and either reinforcing or dismantling hierarchical structures that disadvantage marginalized groups. (ibid.).

This is true for the RZ, which displays that spatial arrangements can enhance openness and accessibility for different population groups who need places and spaces to participate socially and culturally.

2.3 Social Inclusion & Social Exclusion

The second part of this theoretical chapter now focuses on the conceptual and theoretical frameworks of different forms of social inclusion and social exclusion, with a particular focus on the classification of political and scientific discourses. This overview is explained by presenting the historical developments and the introduction of the concept in Europe and the European Union (EU), its interpretation, and the current significance in the context of inclusive urban development. After the more detailed classification of the terms, the concept of the inclusive city is explained, and the classification of this label in its meaning and actual applications concerning urban policy measures follows.

2.3.1 Understanding European Paradigms of Social Exclusion

Within academic discourses, several definitions of inclusion exist (May & Alisch, 2024, p. 25). The concept, with its multifaceted dimensions and historical roots, has become a major subject in current conversations in scholarly and policy contexts (Liang et al., 2022; Anttiroiko & De Jong, 2020). In international politics and linked literature, the closely related phrase "social inclusion" has also gained popularity (O'Donnell et al., 2018). But as Silver (2015) makes clear, there needs to be more clarification on what inclusion is and how it can be reached (ibid.). So therefore, we need to ask how social inclusion is exactly defined. From a normative standpoint, there are differences in the prevailing desirable structure and image of an inclusive society (Silver, 1994). Furthermore, social inclusion is increasingly defined through its opposite: social exclusion (Gidley, 2010). Without inclusion, exclusion could not exist (Silver, 2003). The various forms of exclusion, whether political, economic, or social, differ in terms of their relevance in different places, depending on the existing social structures, institutions, or historical or cultural contexts (Silver, 2015, p. 5). Social exclusion on a conceptual level still endures an absence of precision, as it is understood and evaluated differently (Madanipour, 2000). Therefore, various people hold different conceptions about what it means to argue against exclusion (Silver, 1994). Particularly between social exclusion and poverty, there exists some indistinctness, and some scholars do find the term "social exclusion" too indefinable, thinking it's taking away the focus from deprivation and poverty (Madanipour, 2000). Although economic exclusion is most of the time considered a painful and crucial form of exclusion (Madanipour, 2000), inclusion and exclusion are concepts that go way further, including several forms of capital and social dimensions (Anttiroiko & De Jong, 2020).

In its contemporary understanding, social exclusion emerged in France (Sen, 2007). One of the most influential works during that time was René Lenoir's 1974 publication *Les Exclús: Un Français sur Dix*, which described the lives of

disadvantaged groups such as unemployed individuals and people with disabilities (Anttiroiko & De Jong, 2020; Silver, 2003). "The concept came into use in France in the 1970s, if referred to, amongst others, the mentally and physically handicapped, elderly handicapped, suicidal people, abused children and drug addicts" (Aasland & Fløtten, 2001, p. 1027). The unique attribute of these groups was not necessarily their poverty, though many of them were poor; it was their disconnection from "mainstream society" in ways that went beyond economic deprivation (Wright & Stickley, 2013, p. 72). Approximately ten percent of the French population fell into this category (Rimmermann, 2012). Over time, additional groups—including immigrants, young people without jobs, and school dropouts—were added to the category of social exclusion (Aasland & Fløtten, 2001). Initially, the concept was associated with poverty, later expanding to include unemployment and marginalization (Rimmerman, 2012).

For the European Union (EU), social exclusion became a central concept in its policy against poverty in the 1980s, aiming to address the stigma linked to deprivation and poverty (Rimmerman, 2012). During the 1970s, within several EU member states, the presumption existed that poverty had been significantly reduced, leaving behind a residual group that would disappear through economic progress and growth (EU Commission, 1992). However, these assumptions were challenged by the rise in poverty and unemployment in the 1980s and 1990s. In response, the Council of Ministers implemented a resolution to raise awareness about social exclusion, address it, and endorse policies to combat it (Atkinson & Da Voudi, 2000).

In Western Europe, the economic restructuring of social security systems in the 1980s and 1990s was particularly visible in cities, where the gap between disadvantaged individuals and those benefiting from these systems became more apparent (Atkinson, 2000). As unemployment and poverty continued to be pressing issues, political actors of the EU turned more towards the issue of social exclusion by the end of the 20th century.

In 1989, the European Council and the Social Affairs Ministers passed a resolution recognizing that "combating social exclusion may be regarded as an important part of the social dimension of the internal market" (Cianetti, 2018, p. 789). But this resolution did not address racial and ethnic discrimination or minority groups as contributing factors to social exclusion. But social exclusion is not solely related to poverty and unemployment. Minorities, for example, face disadvantages that go beyond material deprivation (Rimmerman, 2012). A decade later, the Treaty of Amsterdam introduced a non-discrimination clause, setting a new course for action against discrimination on the grounds of "sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, or sexual orientation," (Cianetti, 2018, p. 790).

But still after 1993, the EU's need for action to combat social exclusion was mainly justified by the threat it posed to economic growth and competitiveness, as well as its potential to undermine core elements of the European social model, placing unsustainable financial strains on social protection systems (Atkinson & Da Voudi, 2000). Tuparevska et al. (2020) for instance found out “that the economic dimension is central to the EU conceptualization of social exclusion” (Tuparevska et al., 2020, p. 185), a concern reflected by the former president of the European Parliament, Nicole Fontaine, who claimed in her speech in March 2000 at the European council meeting in Lisbon that “the best safeguard against social exclusion is a job” (CEU, 2002, p. 22). Between 2000 and 2005, the EU focused more on the subject of social exclusion also by committing to the *Lisbon Strategy* which included marginalized groups (Cianetti, 2018).

But since the beginning of the 21st century, “an ever-widening array of academics has addressed the destructive impact of ‘raw capitalism’ and neoliberalism in socio-economic policies in common and urban governance in particular” (Anttiroiko & De Jong, 2020, p. 17). With regard to the EU, the conceptualization of social exclusion proceeds via the economic dimension (Tuparevska et al., 2020). Social exclusion is a frequently addressed subject of EU policies (ibid.), but according to Tuparevska et al., the “EU lifelong policies are not concerned with rectifying the causes that have brought about social exclusion” (Tuparevska et al., 2020, p. 183). For example, the current plan, “The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan” makes it clear that the EU focuses on marginalized groups in particular, finding their way back into the labour market and thus reducing poverty and exclusion.

“Making sure other under-represented groups – e.g. older people, low skilled people, persons with disabilities, those living in rural and remote areas, LGBTIQ people, Roma people and other ethnic or racial minorities particularly at risk of exclusion or discrimination as well as those with a migrant background – participate in the labour market to the maximum of their capacity will also contribute to a more inclusive employment growth” (EC, 2021, p. 10).

Different aspects and framings of exclusion were addressed in national discourses at different times – depending on the political situation and media framing. For example, in some countries, exclusion can be associated with migration and flight, such as Belgium and Germany, while in other contexts, such as France, homelessness was the focus for a time. (Silver, 1994)

While social exclusion has been widely discussed in individual Member States, its meaning has been subject to various interpretations (Atkinson & Da Voudi, 2000). In France, for example, the focus was particularly on the aspect of solidarity (ibid.), whereas in countries such as Germany or the Netherlands with a conservative-

corporatist welfare state model, the focus was more on the goal of reintegrating the long-term unemployed back into the labor market (Atkinson & Da Voudi, 2000).

But the concept is based on the idea that social exclusion is made up of different layers that intertwine, i.e., political, economic, and social circumstances, and even if there may be a specific trigger, there is not just a single sphere for social exclusion (Daly, 2006). Social exclusion is not only about social nor only material distributions but furthermore it is also about the “the social characteristics that reflect the distribution of honor, respect, and social distance” (Silver, 2007, p. 2). The approach of social exclusion recognizes the examinations of social constructs like sex, ethnic background, class, nationality, race, disability and others (ibid.).

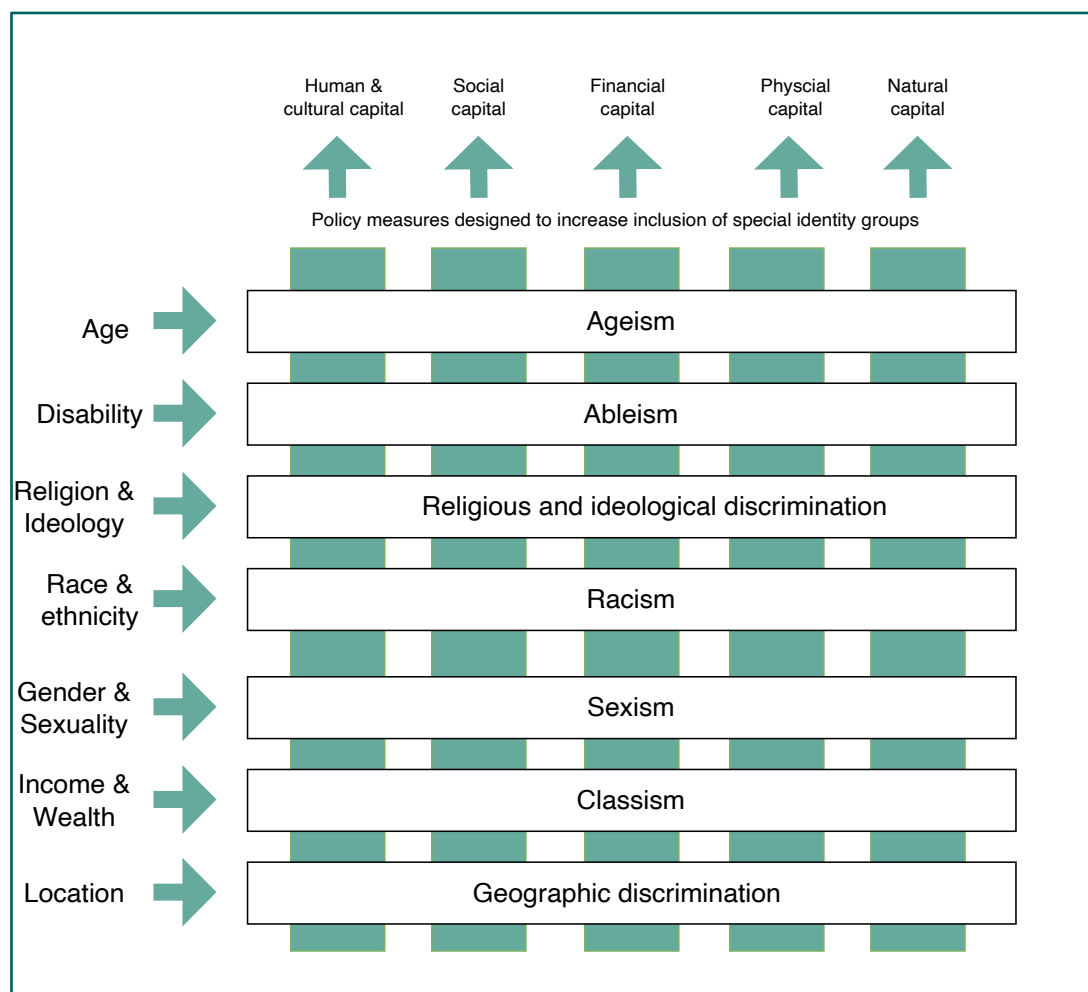


Figure 6: Types of exclusion and capital (adapted from Anttiroiko & De Jong, 2020, p. 29, own design)

Although the various different comprehensions, there is a consensus that social exclusion should be understood as a multidimensional, dynamic, and relational concept (Mathieson et al., 2008 as cited in Tuparevska et al., 2020). Furthermore, social exclusion is also a phenomenon that is characterized as a structural process of social isolation with a loss of numerous aspects of social interaction. Social

exclusion is a complex concept, encompassing disadvantages related to certain norms of social, economic, or political activity that can affect individuals, households, spatial areas, or population groups (Rimmerman, 2012).

Hilary Silver, a renowned scientist for urban studies and sociology, defines social inclusion and exclusion as “context-specific concepts” (Silver, 2015, p. 2) arguing that depending on place and their various structures, such as access to material goods resulting from the location and the prevailing and normative ideas of an inclusive society, the possibilities for inclusion diverge significantly (ibid.). Furthermore, both inclusion and social exclusion need to be interpreted and understood in connection to each other because of their multifaceted interrelatedness (Anttiroiko & De Jong, 2021, p. 28). Especially by considering how practices of social inclusion and the variety of institutional arrangements, countries, and regions can differ, it becomes more obvious that contextual factors matter (Silver, 2015). Although inclusion is a desirable aim for public policies (Anttiroiko & De Jong, 2010), it depends heavily on the circumstances and contexts (Silver, 2015).

„My working definition of social in/exclusion is one of a multi-dimensional, relational process of increasing opportunities for social participation, enhancing capabilities to fulfill normatively prescribed social roles, broadening social ties of respect and recognition, and at the collective level, enhancing social bonds, cohesion, integration, or solidarity“ (Silver, 2015, p. 2 f.).

The interpretation varies depending on the ideological paradigm. For example, in a neoliberal understanding, social inclusion is about access, whereas from a social justice perspective, social inclusion is linked to participation. Increasingly, social inclusion is about human rights, egalitarianism of opportunity, human dignity, and fairness for all, under social justice ideals. (Gidley, 2010).

Although exclusion and inclusion are complex concepts with multiple layers and dimensions, an individual “is socially included if they can fully participate socially, politically, and economically in the society in which they live” (Whelan et al., 2023, p. 61).

Even if exclusion and inclusion take place in different dimensions - be it political, cultural, economic, spatial, or in other ways - these different manifestations nevertheless have something in common: the processual nature of these phenomena. As already mentioned, they are multi-layered, complex, and multidimensional. It is crucial, however, that exclusion involves a restriction of possibilities, opportunities. These are reduced, limited, or even withdrawn.

In contrast, inclusion expands precisely this scope: it creates more opportunities, more participation, more connections, more contact - in short, more involvement in

social processes (Silver, 2015). There are different terms and forms of expression for what inclusion means in concrete terms, and the respective contexts play a central role here. Nevertheless, it can be said that the inclusive process is always characterized by an expanding moment, regardless of which area of inclusion or exclusion one looks at.

In the following section, a special focus is placed on the spatial dimension of inclusion and exclusion. In particular, the concept of the inclusive city will be explained in more detail and critically scrutinized. This is followed by an examination of Martina Löw's spatial sociology, whose theoretical approach is considered in the context of inclusion, exclusion, and the idea of an inclusive city.

2.3.2 Inclusive Cities: Vision or Practice?

In the previous section, it was made evident that inclusion and exclusion are multidimensional concepts. Additionally, inclusion and exclusion cannot be limited to purely material or purely social aspects. Rather, the aim is to understand the different manifestations and the connections between the individual dimensions, components, and contexts of inclusionary and exclusionary processes. National borders, for example, are one of the most important units in terms of socio-spatial exclusion. Modern nation states continuously exclude from their territories. A state controls who is allowed to enter and who must remain outside; therefore, it controls movement across its national borders. This shows that the territory of the nation state is a spatial manifestation of an institutionalized process of spatial exclusion. (Madanipour, 2000)

Another example of an exclusionary spatial phenomenon is that of segregation. The spatial concentration of poverty is often evident in urban neighborhoods that face difficulties getting affordable housing and selection mechanisms, further reinforcing socioeconomic segregation (Musterd et al., 2017). But segregation is the result of societal processes (Cassier & Kesteloot, 2012) and is conceived as a big danger for the economic development of a city as well as an obstacle for realizing an inclusive city (Liang et al., 2022). Furthermore, residential segregation can prevent the emergence of social capital, especially the formation of networks in which people from different social classes interact with each other (de Souza Briggs, 2003, cited by Park, 2024, p. 23). But similarly to the conception and definition of exclusion, segregation can be seen as a lack of social interaction between people. From a sociological perspective, and from a geographic perspective, it may be interpreted as “unequal distribution of social groups across geographical space” (Dadashpoor & Keshavarzi, 2024, p. 2). Just as spatial exclusion can restrict access to opportunities, economic exclusion can perpetuate social inequalities. This highlights the spatial dimension of poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage (Musterd et al., 2017). While low-income

individuals and households are not always completely excluded from human and cultural capital, the indirect effects of poverty remain evident. The area in which one lives largely determines access to high-quality education in most cities and nations. However, targeted state intervention can mitigate this effect. (Anttiroiko & De Jong, 2020) Space forms social relationships and simultaneously manifests them. It plays a crucial role when it comes to either including or segregating urban populations. So, to understand social exclusion, it is necessary to also look at spatial segregation processes. (Madanipour, 2011)

Since the beginning of the 19th century, the exceptional growth of urban settlements has continuously “brought forward the issue of difference in the city as a feature of urban life” (Madanipour, 2000, p. 79), but the reactions vary towards the diversity of urban populations (ibid.). Although they are the ones who cherish diversity and the ones who try to establish a certain order of this diversification, both sides haven’t been able to properly deal with the phenomena of “social marginalisation and exclusion” (ibid.) so far. Class, religion, income, origin, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and other characteristics are still reasons why groups of people in cities are excluded from taking advantage of opportunities that cities have to offer, which is still an urgent problem (Madanipour, 2011). So spatial exclusion does, on the one hand, generate social exclusion and, on the other hand, express social exclusion (Silver, 2015).

Spatial inclusion is a wide concept that involves numerous components. The concept of spatial inclusion includes aspects such as good mobility for everyone, affordable housing, and physical integration of different social groups (Park, 2024). Acknowledging the complex correlation between spatial inclusion and social inclusion is essential for complete understanding. While social inclusion itself can have chain reactions that affect spatial dynamics, some geographical elements directly influence social inclusion (ibid.). To counteract exclusionary dynamics, spatial inclusion must ensure equal access to fundamental urban resources such as housing, transportation, and public infrastructure (Liang et al., 2021). However, how exclusion is implemented, which groups of people are affected, and which structural, political, or cultural mechanisms favor or legitimize these processes remain of central importance. To accurately comprehend the connection between spatial and social inclusion, various components must be considered at the same time, and the complex relationships of these factors have to be considered (Park, 2024).

As Park argues, “For people to establish and participate in inclusive relationships, an inclusive city must contain affordable places to live and public spaces where they can freely meet and interact with others” (Park, 2024, p. 23). Spatial inclusion is therefore not only about physical access but also about ensuring that urban environments facilitate participation and engagement.

Furthermore, the concept of the "inclusive city" has become increasingly central to scholarly discourses, leading to conceptual advancements in inclusive growth, urban design, assessment frameworks, and policy approaches related to urban development (Liang et al., 2022). Addressed by the United Nations in 2001, the inclusive city is a goal that can be achieved through good governance (UN-Habitat, 2001), enabling the eradication of poverty, corruption, and violence (UN-Habitat, 2001). Lefebvre's concept of *The Right of the City* marked the beginning of discussions on the inclusive city, which were revived in the 2000s. With the official implementation of "Cities for All" as the UN-HABITAT III agenda in 2016, the inclusive city became a new paradigm. (Moon, J.H., 2017 as cited in Kwon, Y. H., & Choi, Y., 2021) This ties into Lefebvre's *right to the city* as it is understood as the preeminent site of social interaction ensuring economic and spatial inclusion.

The topic of the inclusive city has thus established itself from an appeal in the middle of the 20th century to a central topic of global politics. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) stated by the United Nations (UN) include the objective of inclusion in 4 goals from a total of 17 (ibid.). Target 11.3 aims for the enhancement of inclusive and sustainable urbanization (UN, 2015). To ensure a better future, cities should be "inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable" (ibid.). The vision is to create a space where all individuals, regardless of wealth, gender, age, race, or religion, can engage productively in urban opportunities, with inclusive decision-making processes serving as a fundamental pillar (UN-Habitat, 2002).

Inclusion as a relevant subject has also been identified at the European level for some time. Here, however, the focus is particularly on the issue of poverty. The primary objective of the EU is to reduce poverty and integrate individuals who are either "in poverty or at riskpoverty" (EU, 2016, p. iii). This goal aligns with Sustainable Development Goal number 11, which focuses on urban inclusion. The European Union's objectives further reflect this focus, with the *Pact of Amsterdam*, a document aiming "to strengthen the urban dimension in European policies" (Olejnik, 2017, p. 178), underscoring the importance of inclusive urban approaches in promoting sustainability.

The inclusive city focuses on creating environments where all individuals, regardless of socioeconomic status, gender, age, race, or religion, can participate in the opportunities cities offer (Schreiber & Carius, 2016). Key dimensions of inclusivity include spatial, social, economic, environmental, and political inclusion. This includes access to public housing, transportation, and necessary services, as well as fostering supportive governance structures and participatory decision-making processes. Liang et al. identified five key conceptual dimensions of the inclusive city: spatial,

social, economic, political and environmental inclusion. Each dimension requires different measures and actions to put into action. (Liang et al., 2022)

For example, “access to public housing, transportation, and public infrastructure” (Liang et al., 2022, p. 75) are mentioned as aspects of spatial inclusion whereas “social inclusion [...] covers sustainable migration and smart participation and citizenship” (ibid.).

The challenge, however, remains that those conceptual insights into the inclusive city are fragmented and lack coherence. However, the definitions of what constitutes an inclusive city are varied and scattered, necessitating further research and clarity in conceptual understanding. (Liang et al., 2022)

Although becoming more inclusive is a widely endorsed goal within urban theory (Bunel, 2019), multiple definitions exist for the inclusive city (Zhao et al., 2023). “The inclusive city is a development-oriented policy concept that can play an important role in introducing a social perspective to the promotion of economic development and conversely, an economic perspective on social development” (Anttiroiko & De Jong 2021, p. 3). Moreover, understanding the dimensions and interrelatedness of exclusion is crucial in developing effective strategies for fostering inclusive urban environments (Anttiroiko & De Jong, 2020).

In order to be able to apply and further analyze the complex concepts and relationships in the context of urban spaces and the goal of social inclusion in the empirical study, a theoretical framework is required that explains the construction and functioning of spaces on both a material and social level. As we have seen, Martina Löw's relational understanding of space and her explanations of the spatial manifestations of inclusion and exclusion provide a rich basis for understanding social spaces and their respective effects on social structures and processes.

The aim of this case study is not to assess whether Potsdam as a city fulfils the criteria of an inclusive city or whether the RZ as an institution fully promotes inclusion through its existence and actions. Rather, the individual components - such as the organization of the RZ, the distribution of space, and the relationship dynamics in the context of community-oriented work for marginalized groups—are examined to find out how social negotiation processes between space and actors influence inclusionary and exclusionary processes.

The Rechenzentrum serves as a concrete case for the production of a space that does not follow capitalist profit interests but rather a democratic logic of distribution that aims to distribute physical space and enable the emergence of social inclusion. Drawing on Löw's theory illustrates the computing center as a case study of how the

various material, symbolic, social and political dimensions in combination form the Rechenzentrum as a space. With the help of their theoretical assumptions, these different parts can be analyzed and questioned not only individually, but in their relationship to each other.

Spatial Inclusion thus represents a process of expanding and enabling participation in the social environment and also in combination of physical/material conditions. Löw's approach shows that space is not just the framework or the place where inclusion and exclusion simply take place. Instead, it becomes clear that the space as such is also the result of inclusion and exclusion. With the connection to Silver, it becomes apparent that it is therefore a matter of reciprocal relationship. Social inclusion expands opportunities and strengthens social relationships, creates participation. Spaces can have a significant influence on this process and at the same time these processes are essential for the emergence of spaces. Therefore, spatial inclusion is a processual dynamic interplay between material components like money, buildings, things and social ones like politics, values, manners and. Space is not a thing, nor is inclusion. Both are trials (Löw, 2002; Silver, 2015). That is the crucial point. The processual character of both concepts illustrates how much we are dealing with moving, changing phenomena. But how these processes can take place, i.e. space and inclusion or exclusion in connection, becomes empirically tangible and explainable through the following investigation.

3 Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodology employed to answer the research questions and conduct the empirical case study of the Rechenzentrum in Potsdam. To explain the complex social and spatial dynamics shaping the RZ as an institution, this thesis employs a qualitative single case study. The thesis follows an abductive research approach, using Martina Löw's theory of space as a lens for interpreting the empirical findings, particularly regarding the socio-spatial interrelationships. The following sections explain the underlying research philosophy, the motives for choosing a single case study design, and elaborating the data collection and analysis methods. These include problem-centered interviews, document analysis, and contextual media research. Furthermore, ethical considerations and the researcher's role and positionality are presented, ensuring transparency and critical reflection during the research process.

3.1 Research Approach

The goal of empirical social research is to systematically analyze a specific aspect of social reality through structured and rule-based survey methods to draw conclusions about the underlying structure and nature of that reality (Misoch, 2015,). Therefore, one can contribute to an understanding of human situations under various conditions and contexts of a perceived situation (Bengtsson, 2016). Qualitative research is distinguished by its adaptability and relevance to the subject (Stamann et al., 2016). As this thesis examines how the RZ as (a) space fosters inclusion among political tensions and urban development, the qualitative empirical approach allows a deeper understanding of the social realities at hand. In addition to revealing the social interactions and dynamics of the RZ, this analysis sheds light on wider implications for inclusive city planning as well.

The research questions serve as the foundation of empirical research, defining the specific focus of the study while guiding both the collection of data and the following analysis. They are decisive guidelines to which the research interest is aligned, and decisions in the research process should help to answer the research questions. Qualitative research questions are often one or two questions, which are made more specific by additional questions. (Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2020)

Typically, "what-questions" are used for exploratory research, while "why" and "how" questions are more suitable for "a case study, experiment, or history" (Yin, 2018, p. 11). Aligned with this approach the following three research questions guide the case study of the Rechenzentrum.

	Research Questions	Data
Q1	How does Potsdam perceive the concept of 'A City for Everyone' (<i>Eine Stadt für alle</i>) for itself, and which population groups are primarily referenced in relation to this aim?	Documents
Q2	Why do social associations serving vulnerable populations, affected by poverty and discrimination, utilize the Rechenzentrum's spaces and collaborate with it?	Interviews
Q3	How does the Rechenzentrum through its work and way of distributing space contribute to the socio-spatial inclusion in Potsdam?	Documents & Interviews

Table 1: Research questions and data sources (own design)

The **first research question** centers on the concept of an inclusive city, which forms the basis for examining urban inclusion in practice and was the initial motivation behind this thesis. This question explores both the idealized vision and real-world interpretations of a city aspiring to inclusion. Addressing it will help situate and interpret the specific case study within Potsdam's broader urban policies and social goals. To accomplish this, thematic analyses of selected official city documents and plans are conducted, offering insight into how inclusion is framed and pursued at the local policy level and which population groups are especially connected to it. The **second research question** aims to identify the specific factors and convincing individuals in the professional field of social inclusion to collaborate with the RZ, with a particular focus on how they engage with both its physical spaces and social relationships integral to these collaborations. This question centers on the perspectives of stakeholders and collaborators of the RZ itself, with its social relationships and spatial characteristics. The **third research question** aims to determine how the work and inclusionary practices of the Rechenzentrum, with its way of distributing space and offering services for vulnerable population groups, differ and align with the inclusionary goals claimed by the city of Potsdam.

In combination, the respective research results of the three research questions will be triangulated at the end of the thesis and then classified and interpreted with the help of an abductive approach using Löw's theory. This strategy is explained in more detail in the following subchapter.

3.1.1 Abductive Reasoning

In recent years, the term "abduction" has increasingly been used to describe an alternative procedure of reasoning to describe progress in knowledge. The American

philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce worked on abduction as the third elementary form of reasoning alongside deduction and induction for the scientific debate (Meyer, 2009). Abduction is a certain kind of thinking that can be used in several types of research. It is not a specific method for collecting or evaluating data, but rather a way of developing ideas and making connections. Concerning theoretical framework, the abductive approach attempts to make observations without presumptions (Reichertz, 2014). As a certain kind of logical inference, it differs from both inductive and deductive approaches (Tavory & Timmermanns, 2014).

It starts with the facts and has no specific theory in connection, but it is more about the need for new theories and explanations. Though often claimed as a method, abduction is more so a form of reasoning (Reichertz, 2014). As Reichertz states: "Abduction searches for theories, deduction for predictions, induction for facts" (Reichertz, 2014, p. 131). Qualitative induction builds the foundation of all scientific strategies that identify new information in already existing knowledge within gained data (Reichertz, 2014, p. 129). Thus, an inductive way of reasoning is also used in this thesis to analyze the documents and interviews as well. „Abductive analysis is an approach and a process that is exploratory, creative, speculative, and about inference“ (Rinehart, 2021, p. 7). This approach offers a wide scope for discovering new phenomena and generating ideas. Nevertheless, this approach also has its limitations, as it does not provide absolute certainty or truth, but only enables it. On this basis, new perspectives can be explored, which help to formulate new findings. It is precisely this approach that is necessary in order to be able to further develop practices of socio-spatial inclusion in cities.

Based on this specific kind of reasoning, Martina Löw's theory of space is used as a framework to better explain and classify the results of the case study. The case study does not attempt to produce a whole new theory in the sense of a grounded theory method, nor is her theory examined in a deductive way. Instead, the abductive approach employed here enables the reworking and improvement of preexisting theoretical ideas in light of empirical data. It allows theoretical insights to arise from the interplay between empirical facts and preexisting theoretical frameworks, even while it does not produce an entirely new theory. Rather, new working hypotheses are generated based on the empirical data.

Here the abductive approach is divided into two central steps: Firstly, the interview and document data were analyzed inductively, without employing a predefined theory to develop the codes and themes. Initially, broader main codes such as "political aspects" or "concepts of justice" were formed, which were supplemented and differentiated in the course of the analysis by more specific subcodes such as "parties" or "intergenerational justice". The aim was to identify central themes,

patterns, and phenomena that emerge directly from the material and contribute to answering the research questions.

The second step involved an abductive interpretation of the data. Afterwards, the results were formulated with explanations, which are then examined in more detail using Löw's theory. The aim is not to test Löw's theory, but to explain the causal relationships of the empirical research results with the help of her theory, so that a new perspective emerges that classifies the phenomena in such a way that recommendations for action can be derived. This means that the topics initially identified are derived directly from the material without a direct explanatory context. Then the explanatory contexts from Löw's theory are applied to the topics, so that in the end an explanatory level is established that brings empiricism and theory together. For example, the interviews showed that the RZ organizes the distribution of space with the help of a democratic advisory board. With her comprehensive theory, Löw also addresses the fact that space and its distribution depend on resources and that these resources are unevenly distributed in society (Löw, 2001). In connection with her theory and the empirical research results, it can be shown that this democratic way of distributing space is not only based on resources, and thus, but also a more inclusive distribution mechanism of space is practiced, which counteracts a pure logic of economic profit. Just as Löw also admits that space can bring about inclusion and exclusion, this type of distribution at the Rechenzentrum is also a component of the distribution of space in Potsdam that influences inclusionary and exclusionary processes.

Theory and empiricism enter into a reciprocal dialogue, whereby new hypotheses or theoretical extensions can be developed from the data material. The cornerstones of Löw's theory - in particular her concepts on the constitution of space via social practices and perceptions - serve as a heuristic instrument for explaining the spatial and social dynamics of the case at hand. This approach goes beyond simply collecting the existing data but includes a creative aspect of the conclusion. New ideas emerge and help to formulate recommendations for action for the practice of planning and organizational management, but also ideas and suggestions that can be used for other case studies and cities to learn from the case of the Rechenzentrum.

3.1.2 Critical Realism

The philosophy of science forms a fundamental basis of scientific social research, as it considers research techniques from an analytical point of view with regard to the truth and reality of the social world (Uddin & Hamiduzzan, 2011). Through the questions scientists (we) investigate and the methodology we choose to use it almost always becomes apparent that scientists adopt a certain philosophical stance

connected to certain values and ideologies (Rosenberg, 2008). Thus, every research is based on a philosophical paradigm that should be disclosed and reflected on in the context of a scientific work, since the philosophy of a scientific approach has a significant influence on the choice of methods, the researcher's role, and the entire research process.

Unlike many philosophies of science, critical realism takes an ontological approach, not an epistemological one (Joseph, 2001). That means that through the lens of critical realism, researchers are encouraged to engage with the maybe hidden, underlying causal relations and events that cause the observable social reality we discover within our research. "According to critical realism, the world exists independently of our knowledge about it, and this knowledge is fallible and theory-dependent" (Næss, 2015, p. 1230). Critical realism serves as this research's foundation, emphasizing that both social reality and spatial configurations are not inherent or fixed but are produced and reproduced through social processes. Through the critical realism approach, scholars try to understand social phenomena and develop actual political measures to tackle social problems (Fletcher, 2017). Just as in this thesis, with the results at the end, recommendations for action are formulated in order to better understand and eventually implement practices achieving spatial and social inclusion in cities.

As shown in Figure 7 below, critical realism assumes that three different levels of reality exist. The first level is the one that we as humans actually perceive and interpret, while the middle, i.e., the second level, is the level on which simple things take place independently of observations from the outside. Last but not least, there is the real level, on which the mechanism requires events to come to light, which we as humans can then ultimately observe.

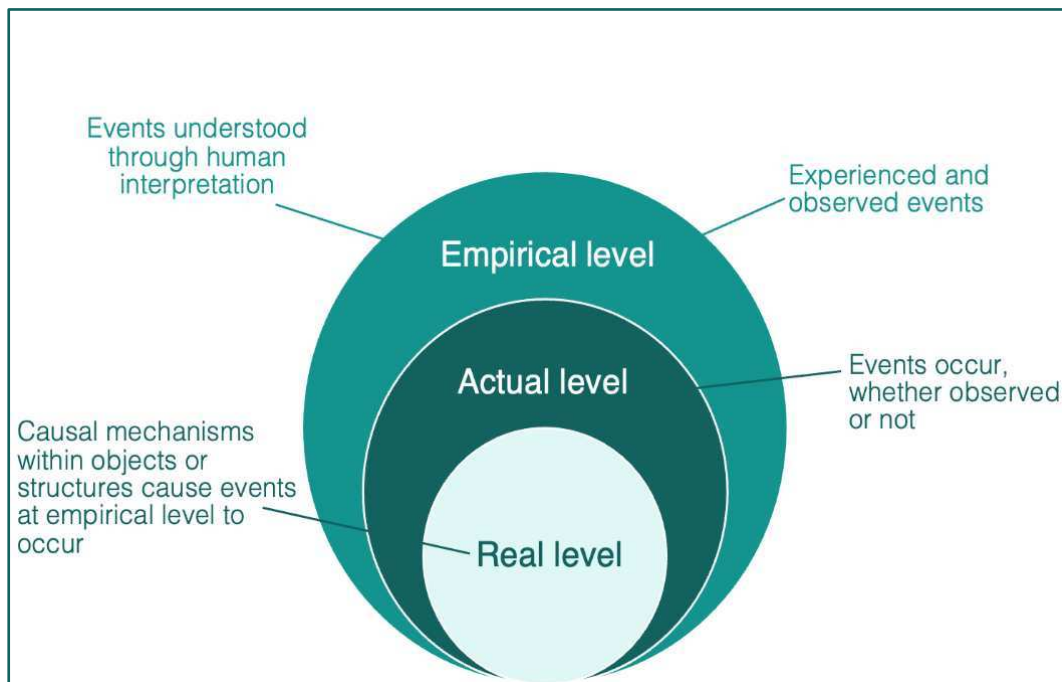


Figure 9: Critical realism model (adapted from Fletcher, 2017, p. 6, own design)

In particular, this third level is to be explored in this work by the abductive approach and the theory of Martina Löw. The abductive approach in this thesis thus gives access to the deepest level of the ontological dimensions of critical realism, which in turn helps to use the identified and observed phenomena of socio-spatial inclusion to explain deeper structures and mechanisms. Martina Löw's theory is particularly suitable for this purpose, as she focuses her explanations on structures and actions and offers approaches to decipher their relationships to space.

3.1.3 Researcher's Positionality

As a researcher, my positionality is shaped by my background in political science and my interest in subjects like inequality, racism, inclusion, poverty, and social justice. Additionally, during my master's program, I focused on the connection between the aforementioned topics and spatial and urban questions. Motivated to make social justice visible by giving attention to subjects that are often overlooked while also let marginalized people speak who are socioeconomically disadvantaged. Growing up in Germany as a Black individual in a predominantly white society and experiencing poverty firsthand during childhood has significantly shaped my perspective. Academia, with all its structures, stands out to me as a deeply privileged system. This background informs my critical stance on inclusion, a concept that has become increasingly popular but often overlooks the material realities of access and resource allocation. As this was my first visit to Potsdam, and since I lack personal connections in the city, my approach combines a critical lens on current inclusion practices with a fresh, outsider perspective. I am particularly focused on examining

who benefits from resources and how societal power dynamics might be shifted towards genuine inclusivity.

My academic and biographical background has influenced not only my research interests and questions but also my accessibility to the field of research and the case under investigation. Participation in events at the RZ and the search for interview partners followed an initial plan. During the field research, however, new contacts emerged that enabled me to conduct further interviews.

Although I did not explicitly express my personal opinion of the Rechenzentrum and its work to the participants, I had the impression that my appearance, as well as the information about my origins, my studies, and my research stay in Potsdam, contributed to a positive perception of me as a person. This encouraged the interlocutors to share additional information with me.

In addition, my research was guided by the concern to gain a deeper understanding of spatial inclusion and thus possibly contribute to better social interaction and to the reduction of exclusion and discrimination. An interview with representatives of the Garrison Church Foundation would also have been possible. But at the end there was no interview conducted with stakeholders of the Garrison Church because the focus of the thesis was to find out the inclusionary practices and aims of the RZ. Further research should also investigate the Garrison Church supporters and their motives but for this thesis it would have gone beyond the scope. However, depending on one's religious conviction and individual attitude to the urban use of historic buildings, as in the case of the RZ, my research and its results might have been interpreted differently. Thus, there is a connection between one's positioning and the observation and access of the RZ.

This does not mean that the research is less objective. Rather, it must be recognized and reflected that every researcher brings their perspective to the table and that this alone plays a role in the selection of the research topic. (Žukauskas et al., 2018)

3.1.4 Ethical Implications

When conducting empirical research, particularly on sensitive topics such as inclusion, it is crucial to consider the potential impact the research process can have on participants. Ethical considerations must be at the forefront of the research design and implementation. One of the fundamental aspects is ensuring that all participants are thoroughly informed about how their data will be used. Participants must be made aware that their participation is voluntary and that they have the right to withdraw their consent at any point in the research process, without any consequences.

As Bengtsson (2016) states “the participants must be informed orally and/or in writing about the study before being included” (p. 10). To facilitate informed consent, a

comprehensive declaration of consent was provided to each participant. This declaration accurately explained the research to ensure that participants fully understand its contents. It outlined the purpose of the study, the types of data being collected, and how this data will be used, stored, and secured. Moreover, participants were given the option to remain completely anonymous to protect their identity and personal information. In this study, the respondents were primarily people who are in positions to promote inclusion but who are not necessarily affected by the topic. Transparency and the precise explanation of the declaration of consent had top priority, as did the offer of being able to withdraw consent at any time. This step is particularly important in research involving vulnerable populations, where the risk of harm or discomfort may be higher. It was easy to get the consent of all participants, and no one chose to participate in the research anonymously. The form can also be found in the appendix. There was no resistance, and all participants were informed that the work would be publicly visible with their names at the end. By the end of the completion, none of the participants had changed their minds about what they could have done at any time.

In the course of the interviews, special attention was given to ensure that participants felt at ease and free to speak openly. In order to implement this, participants were told that there were no “incorrect” answers, stressing the value of their experiences and viewpoints. Another crucial aspect of the research process was transparency; participants were well-informed about the study's purpose, how the interviews would be used, and that the research was part of a master's thesis. During the entire study, strict confidentiality was upheld so that no information shared by one participant was revealed to others. Moreover, during participation in events at the Rechenzentrum, utmost efforts were put forth to honor privacy and ethical considerations. Even though only a few events were attended, any insights gained from non-public meetings or gatherings were intentionally excluded from the analysis due to the absence of a formal agreement regarding their use. This method maintained ethical research standards and respected the participants' trust placed in the researcher.

3.2 Single Case Study Design

For this thesis, a case study approach was applied to investigate a complex empirical phenomenon in an urban environment. Case study research can be used to study a broad range of subjects (Yin, 2018); however, the essential basis for conducting a case study emerges from one's motivation to understand a complex phenomenon (Yin, 2018). In this case, the phenomenon that is explored is that of social and spatial inclusion in urban environments. To apply a case study as a method means to investigate a phenomenon in which the boundaries between it and the contextual

factors are not distinguishable. Before further discussing the choice and application of the case study approach for this study, it is crucial to identify and define what a case is.

A case relies on various resources, triangulating different data, and deals with different variables. According to Robert Yin, case studies are useful in exploring contemporary phenomena within their real-life situations, particularly when the frontiers between the “phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident (Yin, 2018, p. 15). By focusing on a specific case like the Rechenzentrum in Potsdam, this research can delve into the complexities of inclusion within urban environments, capturing diverse data necessary to understand the underlying processes, interactions, and contexts. The main advantage of this approach is that it allows the qualitative analysis and identification of characteristics that are usually difficult to measure.

Yin classifies three different types of case study approaches, each with distinct goals and methods: explanatory, exploratory, and descriptive (Yin, 2018). In this thesis, an explanatory approach was chosen and implemented for the case study and the subsequent answering of the research questions. An explanatory approach was selected because the ultimate goal is to elucidate certain phenomena, in this case, socio-spatial inclusion in urban environments, to understand the abstract yet measurable relationships and interactions at play. This approach aims to provide a deeper comprehension of these interactions and the underlying mechanisms. The objective is to explain and dissect the connections to obtain well-founded knowledge

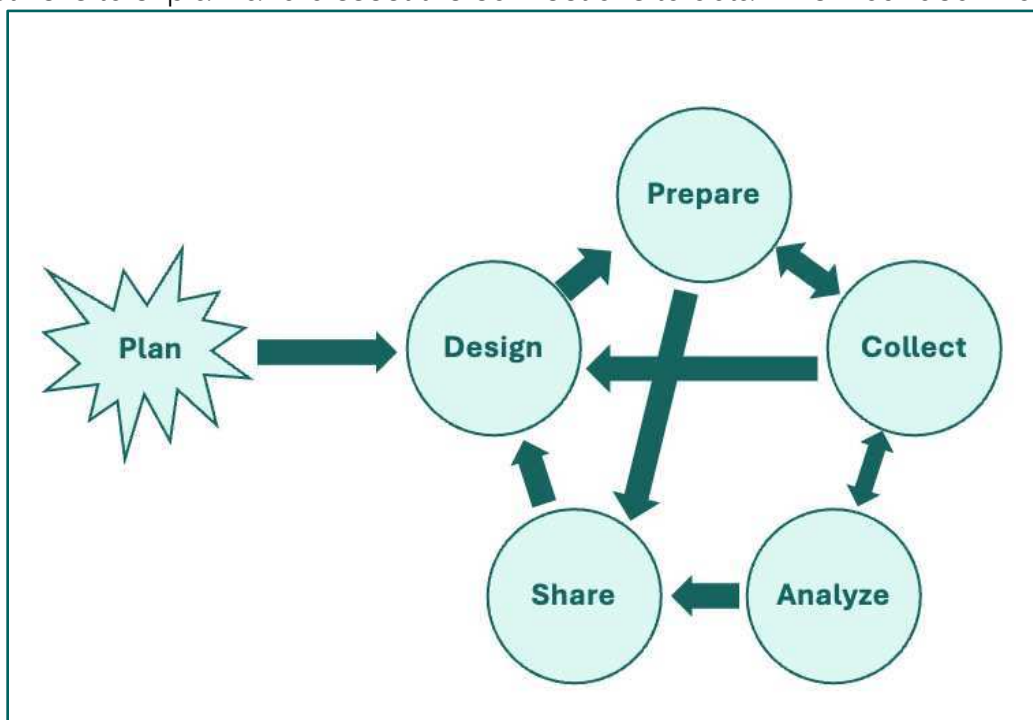


Figure 10: Steps of conducting a case Study (adapted from Yin, 2018, p. 32, own design)

and understanding through the case. As shown in Figure 2 for planning the case study, the researcher must prepare appropriately. In this case, this also meant planning the time of the field work, establishing connections, and contacting interview partners. The research on the case study and the reading into the current situation on site were also important to know in which political situation the RZ was currently in. This was very important because the chapel of the Garrison Church was opened two days before I arrived in Potsdam. Afterwards, the actual phase in which the data was collected followed. In this case, this mainly referred to the conduct of the interviews and the selection of the documents to be analyzed. Followed by the analysis and the final writing of the thesis, to be able to share the results and complete the research project. At the end of the thesis, the aim is to explain the intricacies and the underlying dynamics, thereby offering a comprehensive understanding of the complex and multi-faceted nature of the Rechenzentrum in Potsdam and its related urban political conflicts.

The Rechenzentrum is located in the city center of Potsdam, on the site of the former Garrison Church. It was opened in September 2015 as a socio-creative center and is now the largest of its kind in Brandenburg. On an area of over 5,000 m² with around 220 rooms, the RZ offers space for studios, offices, workshops, rehearsal rooms, event and seminar rooms. These are used both by permanent tenants and temporarily by external users. The tenants consist of over 200 actors from fields such as visual and performing arts, music, design, film, socio-cultural work, education, and social projects. The RZ is managed by the non-profit SPI Foundation, commissioned by the municipal redevelopment agency Potsdam. The building itself is a former data center built in 1971. (RZ, 2019)

3.3 Data Sources

A good case study relies on as many resources as possible (Yin, 2018,). One of the most important sources of case study evidence is the interview” (Yin, 2018, p. 118), which is the core of this thesis's research interest. The primary method employed in this study is the semi-structured interview, which allows for in-depth exploration of participants' perspectives while providing the flexibility to adapt to new insights as they emerge. Document analysis constitutes a significant part of the research as well, focusing on three official documents from the city of Potsdam. This analysis aims to uncover the formal strategies, policies, and frameworks guiding urban development and inclusion efforts in the area. Additionally, a contextualization of the RZ and its ongoing conflicts with the Garrison Church foundation is conducted through a systematic review of articles from national and local newspapers. This media analysis helps to gauge public discourse, societal perceptions, and the broader socio-political context surrounding the topics of urban inclusion and development. Together, these

methods provide a comprehensive and multifaceted understanding of the case at hand and its most relevant aspects.

3.3.1 Documents

The selection of the documents was primarily based on their thematic relevance in the context of the inclusive urban development of the city. The texts deal with various subjects concerning the future of Potsdam as a city confronted with multiple challenges, including population growth, segregation, and poverty. Table 19 provides an overview of the three analyzed documents:

The first document is a long-term urban development strategy titled *Integriertes Stadtentwicklungskonzept für die Stadt Potsdam 2035* (*Integrated Urban Development Concept for the City of Potsdam 2035, INSEK 2035*). The second is a concise vision statement for the city's future development, *Leitbild für die Stadt Potsdam* (*Mission Statement for the City of Potsdam*). The third document is a comprehensive report of the local poverty situation, the *Armutsbericht der Stadt Potsdam 2022* (*Potsdam Poverty Report 2022*), providing statistics and the current challenges related to socioeconomic inequalities.

While the current city development concept and the mission statement are public documents, offering an all-encompassing perspective on Potsdam's future development plans and not explicitly focusing on a specific target group, they nevertheless include the goal to realize "one city for everyone" (LHP, 2016, p. 1 f.; LHP, 2022a, p. 68, 86, 91–118). This guiding aim represents the claim to inclusion and makes the documents particularly suitable for an analysis regarding the consideration of vulnerable and marginalized population groups. The poverty report

	Title (Original & Translation)	Year	Publisher	Chapter
1	Integriertes Stadtentwicklungskonzept Potsdam 2035 <i>Integrated City Development Concept Potsdam 2035 Final Draft</i>	2022	State Capital Potsdam (LHP)	One city for everyone (p. 68, 86, 91 – 118)
2	Leitbild für die Landeshauptstadt Potsdam <i>Guideline for the State Capital Potsdam</i>	2016	State Capital Potsdam (LHP)	One city for everyone (p. 1 – 2)
3	Armutsbericht für die Landeshauptstadt Potsdam 2022 <i>Poverty Report for the State Capital City of Potsdam 2022</i>	2022	State Capital Potsdam (LHP)	Target Groups (p. 161 – 174)

Table 2: Overview of analyzed documents (own design)

complements this perspective with a specific focus on socioeconomic challenges affecting several population groups. Poverty is a multidimensional and complex

phenomenon and is closely related to social exclusion mechanisms (Silver, 2007). For all three documents, only the sections relevant to the research questions and thematic context of the case study were included in the analysis. The parts of the *INSEK 2035* and the *Mission Statement* that are explicitly dedicated to the goal of "one city for everyone" were examined, as was the part of the *Poverty Report*, which presents the target groups to which Potsdam focuses its efforts to combat poverty for specific population groups.

Each of the three documents could have discussed various population groups living in Potsdam. While the poverty report primarily addresses people who are affected by socioeconomic disadvantages, the question of social inclusion is essential as to how and which population groups are recognized concerning different kinds of poverty. Social exclusion and poverty share many dimensions and overlap, which is why it is very important to consider the intersections of these two phenomena. Both concepts have in common that they are contextual and multidimensional. Research on social exclusion can make a valuable contribution to poverty studies, which increasingly consider non-monetary and social factors. (Silver, 2010) Furthermore, the city of Potsdam states, poverty can't be reduced to only monetary aspects. The poverty report acknowledges that poverty leads to social exclusion and prevents social participation, which is why the city wants to dedicate itself to the task of reducing the risks of poverty (LHP, 2022b, p. iii).

Thus, in view of the research questions and the present case study, it makes sense to integrate documents into the analysis that are dedicated to inclusion, exclusion, and poverty in the context of Potsdam's urban development. The different themes of the documents make it possible to examine to what extent the urban development perspectives of the *INSEK 2035* and the *Mission Statement* intersect with the target groups of the *Poverty Report*. There are also other concept papers published by the city of Potsdam on specific groups, such as seniors, migrants, or people with disabilities, discussing their needs and challenges. However, this analysis addresses a broader approach that does not center around a specific group of people. Thus, the scope of this master's thesis emphasizes which population groups in the spectrum of exclusion, poverty, and urban development are named, to what extent, and in what way. That's why it was important not to choose a document that is explicitly dedicated to one particular population group.

Furthermore, these two documents contain the goal and the term "one city for everyone" (*Eine Stadt für Alle*). This qualifies them in particular for analysis in the context of the inclusive city and, beyond that, for a deeper understanding of the contexts of urban politics of the case under consideration. It becomes clear which

urban policy goals and measures the city pursues. The extent of social inclusion and exclusion ultimately depends on normative or political decisions (Huster et al., 2012). In particular, the two documents dedicated to the inclusive urban development of Potsdam are not a reflection of actual practice but rather concepts, plans, and declarations of intent that provide information about what the city of Potsdam is planning and how it wants to be perceived by the outside world. However, the identification of the mentioned groups that are discussed provides information about whether and how the subject of social inclusion is framed at the level of urban planning and city politics, how much emphasis it gets, and whether some population groups are considered above others. Therefore, a document analysis not only answers the first research question but also contextualizes the case at hand, offering valuable information to understand the RZ's political relevance.

3.3.2 Problem-Centered Interviews

A total of 11, semi-structured guideline-based problem-centered interviews were conducted for the data collection. The basis of the conversations was a thematically structured guideline that specified central questions focusing on the role, usage of and challenges of the Rechenzentrum. Additionally, the interviews with the city planners included questions concerning the inclusive urban development of Potsdam.

The problem-centered interview is applied in contexts in which a socially relevant problem needs to be analyzed in depth and understood through the perspectives of those affected. It is particularly suitable when: a complex, multifaceted understanding of a problem or area of experience is to be obtained, biographical and discursive elements are to be brought into focus, the perspectives and subjective views of the interviewees are central and a dialogical, problem-centered approach to the interview is important, a link between qualitative depth and the researchers' existing prior knowledge is to be used. The identification of a socially relevant problem forms the basis of the problem-centered interview (PZI). The focus here is on choosing a topic that is both of public importance and affects the real lives of those affected. The research question should be formulated in concrete terms and linked to a clearly defined social problem. (Witzel, 2022)

The relevance of the problem under investigation in this case study arises from the socio-spatial exclusion of urban residents and marginalized groups. The aim is to shed light on a socially significant topic that concerns both structural exclusion processes and their effects on urban space. At the center of the study is filling an existing knowledge gap: The aim is to make visible the perspectives, worlds of experience, and implicit everyday knowledge of those actors who operate in the

context of the RZ. The qualitative approach makes it possible to capture the complexity of these subjective perspectives and thus gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between space, belonging, and participation in urban development.

The knowledge gathered before the interviews should serve the researcher as well-informed interviewer who provides initial indications on interesting approaches. But it is essential that reflects one's ideas and personal perspective, one's attitude and position (chapter 3.1.3), and ensures a sensitized basic attitude. This also includes dealing sensitively with the participants in the interviews: recognizing their needs and paying attention to signals such as pauses, hesitation, or thoughtful glances, and taking them seriously. That's why it was made clear in the interviews at such points that there are no "wrong" answers, for example, that the participants can take their time. Transparency about the purpose of the research and a patient attitude, and also a place of their choice where we can conduct the interview also helped to realize a sensitive approach.

The participants were chosen according to their role and relationship with the RZ as well as their profession. The participants were classified into three different categories: The first category consisted of people who have a direct connection to the RZ in terms of being employed, being a tenant, or being a member of another association that serves as a stakeholder of the Rechenzentrum. The second category of people that were interviewed was made up of individuals working for organizations serving vulnerable populations affected by poverty, collaborating with the RZ. The third category consisted of people who work for the urban planning department of Potsdam. It was important to select people who have a personal and/or professional connection to the RZ, but also to include people from outside the RZ to explore outsiders' views on the RZ and offer perspectives on the current future development of the whole of Potsdam. This approach aimed to capture a multitude of perspectives to map the complexity of institutional structures and the individual perceptions of the Rechenzentrum. This way, it was possible to ensure that a multidimensional picture of the RZ was conveyed, which included immaterial as well as material aspects that make up the Rechenzentrum as a spatial and social institution. Table 2 provides an overview of the interview participants, showing their role within the institution they work for, the duration, and the category they belong to. Only two interviews were conducted through online Zoom meetings, and the rest were face-to-face interviews. Accordingly, given the different roles and perspectives, three different interview guidelines were created. The interviews were conducted as guideline-based interviews. The interview guidelines can be found in the Appendix.

The initial question of all interviews was deliberately asked very openly by asking about the individual's idea of an inclusive city. Thus, the interview partners were able to outline their point of view and were given the opportunity for a narrative entry (Przyborski & Wohlrab-Sahr, 2014). After the initial question, the questions were arranged according to certain thematic blocks. The thematic blocks were related to the cooperation and perception of the Rechenzentrum in terms of inclusion, the classification of the urban situation and development of Potsdam, and the difficulties and conflicts the respective institutions faced.

Following the approach of Misoch (2015), the interview guide served to divide the thematic focal points into structured blocks and to ensure that all relevant aspects of the research questions were covered. The questions were deliberately formulated openly to allow the interviewees to talk freely about their own experiences, perceptions, and feelings.

Although the questions were worked out in writing in advance, care was taken to leave enough room for new information and unexpected answers. For this purpose, additional possible inquiries were prepared, which could be used for deepening if necessary. In the course of the interviews, there were also several cases of spontaneous follow-up questions that arose from new findings in the course of the conversation and considered the openness of the qualitative research approach. (ibid.)

	Name	Organization	Position	Leng	Category
P1	Anja Engel	Rechenzentrum	Main cultural manager	1h 6m	Member of RZ
P2	Mara Bubel	Rechenzentrum	Employee,	38m	Member of RZ
P3	Jasper Precht	Rechenzentrum	Tenant & Artist	34m	Member of RZ
P4	Heinrich Weber	Rechenzentrum & für e.V.	Employee & Board Member	43m	Member of RZ
P5	Kristina Tschesch	Kulturlobby Potsdam & Rechenzentrum	Board member	43m	Member of RZ
P6	Janny Armbruster	Fachpolitischer Beirat	Board member	37m	Member of RZ
P7	Imma Chienku	Refugees Emancipation e.V.	Project coordinator	27m	Non-profit organization
P8	Gabriel Klusmeyer	AWO Potsdam, Erzählcafé & Flüchtlingshilfe Babelsberg	Employee	22m	Non-profit organization
P9	Kristin Geschwäntner	Kultur (Kulturwege e.V.)	Main Manager	49m	Non-profit organization
P10	Susan Engel	AWO Potsdam, Junge Platform	Project coordinator	33m	Non-profit organization

P11	Sebastian Anderka	Urban Planning Department	Urban Planner	1h 9m	Urban Planning
P12	Patrick Osth	Urban Planning Department	Urban Planner	1h 9m	Urban Planning
P13	Matthias Gumberger	Social Planning Department	Social Planner	1h 9m	Urban Planning

Table 3: Overview of interview participants (own design)

Overall, the interview guide did not serve as a strict scheme to adhere to. Whenever possible, an attempt was made to ask relatively open questions so that the interviewee could answer the questions well on their own (Przyborski & Wohlrab-Sahr, 2014).

According to Witzel, the evaluation of problem-centered interviews can be carried out with all approaches of qualitative text analysis, as long as they serve the research interest. The analysis of the interviews should be based on the empirical findings and interpretations. The collected overall material, which includes interview transcripts, interpretative knowledge components from the interviews, and postscripts, as well as all other interpretative findings, serves as the basis. (Witzel, 2022)

In this study, a thematic analysis according to Braun and Clarke was carried out following the survey. This method makes it possible to systematically work out central patterns of meaning (themes) in the data material and to record their depth of content. The thematic analysis also makes it possible to combine both theory-based and inductively developed interpretations and to visualize the perspectives of the interviewees in all their complexity. It is therefore particularly suitable for reconstructing the experiential dimensions of socio-spatial exclusion and the role of the computer center as a space of participation.

The aim was to achieve an even distribution of interview partners across the various categories. Access to the actors at the RZ wasn't difficult to establish, as the one-month research stay provided numerous opportunities to initiate contact during events or established meetings on site. Most of the interview contacts were therefore made directly in the field. Anyone not met in person was also contacted by email, which also proved to be an effective method of access. All of the people contacted agreed to take part in an interview; only one organization, which offers housing advice for refugees at the Rechenzentrum, did not respond despite being contacted several times. Before each interview, a written consent form was provided in duplicate and explained so that the interviewees knew what would happen to their data and what exactly it would be used for. Afterwards, verbal consent was also given again. In order

to evaluate the interviews, they were recorded and afterwards transcribed, coded, and analyzed with the software MAXQDA.

The following chapter describes in detail the methodological procedure for conducting the thematic analysis, including the individual evaluation steps, coding with MAXQDA, and the formation and reflection of central themes. It is made transparent how an analytical approach to the research questions was developed from the empirical material

3.4 Data Analysis

One of the most underdeveloped aspects of conducting a case study is the analysis of case study data. Various strategies and techniques are available for this purpose, and the process typically begins with “playing” with the data—testing and exploring it in different forms. Information may be visualized or organized using tools such as matrices. (Yin, 2018)

In this study, data analysis was approached as a flexible and iterative process in line with abductive research logic. Rather than starting from fixed theoretical propositions, the analysis was guided by empirical insights.

Yin considers such exploratory engagement part of a broader analytic strategy, which precedes the selection of specific techniques. He outlines four general strategies for case study analysis, followed by five analytic techniques: “(1) pattern matching, (2) explanation building, (3) time series analysis, (4) logic models, and (5) cross-case synthesis” (Yin, 2018, p. 175).

In this project, explanation building was chosen both as the overall analytic strategy and the primary technique. Through this technique in combination with the abductive reasoning process it was possible to construct a plausible explanation for the observed dynamics of socio-spatial inclusion at the Rechenzentrum.

The next section outlines the specific technique of thematic analysis, which served as the main tool for identifying and organizing recurring patterns in the data.

3.4.1 Applying Thematic Analysis

To answer the first research question⁴, and analyze the documents adequately, the thematic analysis method developed by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (2006) was used to analyze and identify thematic patterns within the data. Thematic analysis as a method works to find thematic patterns and examine as well as describe data at hand in a detailed way (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The method is characterized by the fact that data is collected independently of the analytical development. The aim is to

⁴ How does Potsdam perceive the concept of 'A City for Everyone' (Eine Stadt für alle) for itself, and which population groups are primarily referenced in relation to this aim?

find patterns in the data and to be able to make a theoretically sound interpretation. (Braun and Clarke, 2021)

In applying thematic analysis, it is necessary to make choices about questions that need to be answered before the analysis actually starts. Terry et al. state (2017) that although thematic analysis is not tied to a certain ontological approach, it is particularly important that the researcher substantiates their theoretical view. A coherent and well-grounded thematic analysis must be transparent about the researcher's theoretical assumptions and viewpoints (Braun & Clarke, 2006). "Any theoretical framework carries with it several assumptions about the nature of the data, what they represent in terms of the 'world', 'reality', and so forth" (ibid.).

To ensure reliable results, the interpretations and linked choices within the thematic analysis need to be carefully documented, whereby it is also important to go beyond a mere superficial description of the data. This method is ideal for scientists who aim to uncover meanings without having theoretical constraints to consider. Therefore, the method allows for flexibility and accessibility as well. (Ahmed et al., 2025).

In the context of this case study, the thematic analysis of the documents consists of six phases, following the approach of Braun and Clarke (2006). This is by no means a linear process, which is why they are aptly called phases. Rather, it is also a process for the researcher involving switching back and forth between the phases. (Terry et al., 2017)

Although Yin suggests starting the process of explanation building with an initial theoretical statement or explanatory hypothesis, an abductive research approach was deliberately chosen in this study. This means that no fixed theoretical propositions were formulated at the beginning. Instead, the theoretical concepts and explanatory patterns were developed iteratively from the empirical material. This approach allows for a more open and contextual analysis, which is particularly suitable if the relationships to be investigated are complex and open to theory. The explanation is thus not deductively tested but gradually generated and refined in the course of the analysis process, which considers the dynamic nature of explanation building (Vaughan, 1992). The iterative character of the procedure is retained, as preliminary interpretations were developed in the course of the analysis and continuously fed back to the data in order to arrive at a well-founded explanation.

This analysis was guided by the quality criteria of qualitative content analysis, as formulated by Rädiker and Kuckartz (2020), among others. Firstly, all interviews relevant to the research question were included in the analysis, which avoided an episodic or arbitrary approach. Secondly, all interviews were evaluated according to a uniform scheme – each interview was first read in its entirety before detailed coding

was carried out. Thirdly, the entire research process, including the survey and evaluation procedures, was transparently documented so that traceability for third parties is guaranteed. Fourth, methods were used that enable intersubjective verifiability of the analysis results, for example, by involving several people in the coding and validation of the data. (Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2020)

Since the interviews were not theory-driven, but analyzed in the sense of an abductive approach, the qualitative content analysis was used openly and flexibly. This approach made it possible to identify new insights and patterns arising from the data without being strictly bound to theoretical assumptions in advance. Bengtsson (2016) pointed out that there are no fixed criteria for the size of the unit of analysis, neither in terms of the number of cases included nor in terms of the volume of texts analyzed – was considered. According to Down-Wambolt (1992, as cited in Bengtsson, 2016) content analysis is more than a counting process, as the goal is to link the results to their context” (Bengtsson, 2016, p. 9). Even though qualitative content analysis is originally located in the social science context, it is not tied to a specific scientific discipline, but can be used in a variety of ways (Bengtsson, 2016)

The interviews were fully coded, with only the participants' answers being considered; questions and statements formulated by the researcher, as well as formalities (e.g., greetings or comments unrelated to the interview subject) were excluded from the analysis.

In the document analysis, those sections were specifically coded that referred to the concept of a "city for everyone". In the case of the poverty report, the passages in which specific target groups were addressed were also recorded. A tabular overview of the coding can be created for better traceability. Table 7 shows the six phases of the thematic analysis according to Braun and Clarke (2006). Especially in phase 2 – the generation of the first codes – it was necessary to formulate more precise coding rules in order to ensure a systematic and theory-driven analysis. In the following

subchapters, in addition to the work of Braun and Clarke, further methodological literature, in particular by Kuckartz (2020) and Saldaña (2013), was also discussed in order to provide a comprehensive theoretical foundation for the chosen approach.

Phase	Description of the Process
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic “map” of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Table 4: Phases of document analysis (adapted from Braun & Clark, 2006, p. 87, own design)

After selecting the three policy documents, they were first read thoroughly to gather first impressions. This was followed by developing a coding strategy. The documents were encoded with the help of the software MAXQDA. Before the first coding cycle, however, the coding procedure had to be specified and adapted in more detail. Even though Clarke and Braun (2006) make it clear that there are different coding processes, depending on whether the codes are formed on the basis of the material or on the basis of an existing theory, even more precise coding rules were necessary to ensure a stringent and well-founded procedure. This was important not only for the analysis of the documents but also for the subsequent examination of the interviews conducted. For the coding, all statements of the interviewees were included. The exact procedure for identifying and coding these text passages is explained in detail in the following chapter on the coding strategy.

3.4.2 Coding Strategy

For the analysis of the qualitative data material, a two-stage coding process according to Saldaña (2013) was chosen. This method seemed particularly suitable because the complexity and diversity of the data required both inductive structuring and interpretative deepening. In the first cycle, descriptive coding was carried out, which served to structure the different data on a basic level. This approach was particularly useful due to the different types of data – interviews, documents, and other text sources – and was also used for document analysis. However, since pure descriptive coding was not sufficient to capture complex relationships and patterns in the material, pattern coding was used in the second cycle. This serves to identify and

explain relationships, correlations, and thematic relationships within the data (Saldaña, 2013).

The coding process was carried out using the MAXQDA software, which enabled a structured and transparent analysis of the data. Initially, broader main codes such as "political aspects" or "concepts of justice" were formed, which were supplemented and differentiated in the course of the analysis by more specific subcodes such as "parties" or "justice". This procedure supported the systematic order and detailed recording of the relevant subject areas. In order to ensure the quality and reliability of the coding, regular reviews of the coding were carried out as well as reflection loops with professional colleagues, which served as peer review. Although the coding was mainly carried out independently, this feedback ensured an increase in intercoder reliability and transparency of the analysis process.

The choice of the two-stage coding process is mainly due to the requirements for the analysis: The data was complex and diverse, which is why it was necessary to first develop basic categories inductively and then to work out deeper relationships using interpretative methods. This approach corresponds to the abductive research logic, which makes it possible to generate insights from the data material itself as well as to interpret them in a theoretically sound manner. Structured coding made a significant contribution to answering the research questions systematically and well-founded by identifying and structuring relevant topics and clarifying their interrelationships.

Martina Löw's socio-spatial theory was used to interpret the coded data, which was presented in detail in chapter 2. Löw's theory focuses on the interactions between social practices and spatial structures and emphasizes how social spaces are constructed and perceived through the actions of actors. Löw's theoretical perspective was particularly relevant for the analysis, as it helped to understand the identified issues in the context of urban social spaces and to interpret the complex interdependencies between social, political, and spatial dimensions. By combining inductive data evaluation and theoretical embedding, in-depth insights into the research questions could be gained.

4 Findings

This chapter presents the key findings of the present study. First, the case study is contextualized on the basis of media research, and the political disputes surrounding the Rechenzentrum and the Garrison Church are explained in more detail. Understanding the historical and political context of the Rechenzentrum is essential to provide critical insights into why it remains a focal point of urban political conflicts in Potsdam. This way broader implications for urban development and policymaking are formulated. Following, the results of the interview and document analysis are presented along with the three leading research questions. Within the last section of the chapter, the abductive approach is applied, in which the findings are interpreted with the help of Martina Löw's theory of space, theory and empirical based explanations are provided.

4.1 Contextualizing the Case

Supplementary access via journalistic contributions and interview materials was chosen because there are only a few existing scientific publications about the RZ. The sources, dating from 2015 to 2025, were researched as part of a systematic review process. With the help of the targeted keyword combination “Garrisonkirche” AND “Rechenzentrum” AND “Potsdam” AND “Politik” in the WISO⁵-database. A total of 148 journalistic sources were found. However, to be able to understand possible changes in reporting over time, only those newspapers that published at least four articles within the ten years under consideration were included in the analysis. At the end 115 media sources, e.g., articles and interviews from regional and national German newspapers, were included in the corpus. A complete listing of the media sources is provided in the Appendix. It is important to note that the vast majority of these texts originate from newspapers affiliated with the *Märkische Allgemeine*⁶, which constitutes a dominant regional media conglomerate in Brandenburg. This prevalence suggests that the media narratives analyzed predominantly reflect regional journalistic perspectives, potentially shaped by shared editorial policies. National newspapers such as *taz*⁷ and *Die Zeit*⁸ represent exceptions and provide contrasting viewpoints within the corpus. This concentration of sources underscores the significant influence of regional media in shaping public discourse around the Rechenzentrum and the Garrison Church. The aim of this approach was to was

⁵ WISO is an academic platform offering a rich database of scientific journals, magazines, newspapers and eBooks.

⁶ *The Märkische Allgemeine* (MAZ) is a local German newspaper und die most widely read publication in the state of Brandenburg.

⁷ *Die Tageszeitung (taz)* is a national German daily newspaper with a more left political orientation, first published in 1978.

⁸ *Die Zeit* is a national weekly German newspaper that has been published since 1946 and is one of the most widely read newspapers in Germany.

to conduct a deep, comprehensive content analysis of the media discourse but rather to highlight the political significance of the Rechenzentrum. This approach illuminates why the Rechenzentrum has been the subject of intense political debates and conflicts for years. Additionally, interview statements from participants of the case study were also included in order to complement the media analysis and provide inside perspectives on the conflict and circumstances the Rechenzentrum encountered.

4.1.1 The Garrison Church Symbolizing Military Prussian Values

The Garrison Church, an important Prussian Baroque building, was built between 1730 and 1735 for the members of the court and the garrison according to plans by the architect Philipp Gerlach. The Garrison Church, commissioned by Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm I, symbolically embodied the interconnection of church, military, and state (Oswalt, 2021). Constructed under the orders of the Prussian royal family (Langels, 2020), it played a significant role during the 19th century as an important symbol of Prussian German national Protestantism, which was also associated with antidemocratic, bellicose, and ethno-nationalist ideas (Oswalt, 2023). It stood as a powerful symbol of the alliance between these three institutions (ibid.). The Garrison Church in Potsdam holds significant historical and symbolic value, particularly due to its association with the National Socialists. On March 21, 1933, the Nazis staged the propagandistic "Day of Potsdam" at this site to mark the opening of the Reichstag (Götzmann & Nitz, 2015). A prominent display under a large photograph of the infamous handshake between President Paul von Hindenburg and Chancellor Adolf Hitler in front of the Garrison Church included items such as a pickelhaube, a steel helmet, a top hat, and an SA cap, symbolizing the connection between reactionary bourgeoisie, the military, and the National Socialist movement (Götzmann & Nitz, 2015).

Even before that day, during the Weimar Republic (1918 – 1933), the Garrison Church had already become a symbol for the extreme right, attracting anti-Semites, militarists, and nationalists of all kinds (Grünzig, 2020). In the early 20th century, the Garrison Church gained widespread popularity and recognition as a pilgrimage site and a symbol of Prussian-German heritage. Nationalists and those with similar attitudes revered this place and the church (ibid.). The nationalist and militaristic forces found themselves in a crisis after 1918, and they were unable to identify anything other than the democratic values of the Weimarer Republic, leading to a return to the old Prussia and hence the time of Friedrich Wilhelm I., who allowed the Garrison Church to be built. The "Geist von Potsdam" emerged as a kind of identification space for those with a nationalist and militaristic mindset (ibid.). In the years that followed, the Garrison

Church played a central role for various right-wing extremist organizations such as the NSDAP or the German National People's Party *Deutsche Volkspartei*, which was the leading right-wing extremist party in Germany until 1930. At the same time, the Garrison Church also served as a networking venue for various right-wing extremist camps, which marched and met there. Even though the SPD (Social Democratic Party) took a stand against the *Geist der Stadt Potsdam ghost of the city* by publishing the *Potsdamer Volksblatt*, an SPD-newspaper, against the right-wing extremists, all in all, there was not a single event of an explicitly democratic organization in the Garrison Church between 1918 and 1933. (ibid.)

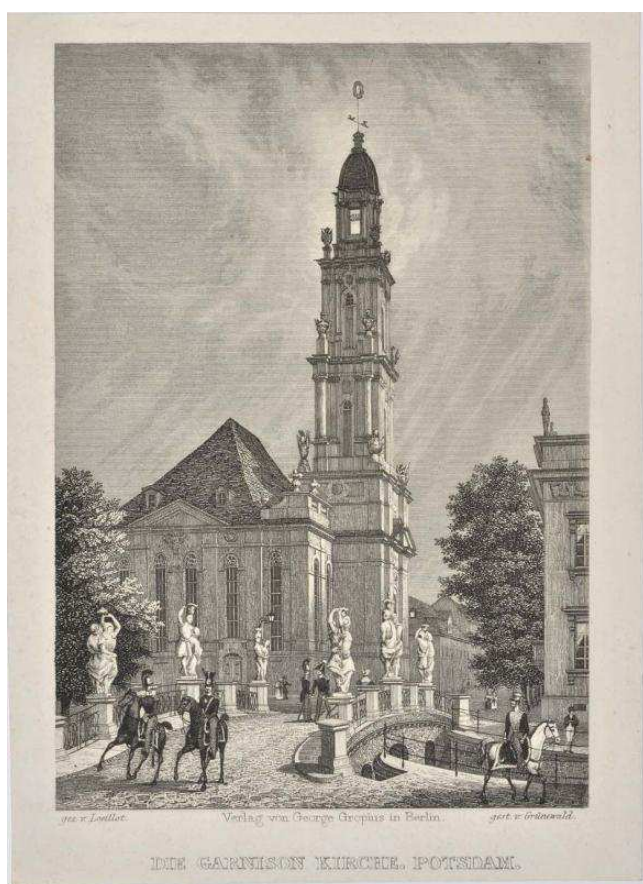


Figure 12: The Garrison Church between 1832 – 1837 (© Potsdam Museum – Forum für Kunst und Geschichte, 2025)



Figure 11: The Garrison Church ruin in 1945 (Sabrow cited in brandenburgikon.net, 2008)

In 1945, during the Second World War, the church was destroyed by an air raid, with its ruins standing as a prominent city landmark until the church was demolished in 1968, and the Rechenzentrum was subsequently built on the site (Oswalt, 2023). On Sunday, May 23, 1968, the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) had the ruins of the Garrison Church blown up at church service time in order to build a data center in its place (Schmitt, 2020). And indeed, this destruction, the demolition decision, was ultimately the result of a compromise between both, state institutions and the church representatives, whereby the Protestant church in general wanted to concentrate on building smaller community centers rather than large reconstruction projects (Oswalt,

2023). Shortly after the Rechenzentrum was built on the same location, along with Fritz Eisel's famous mosaic *Der Mensch bezwingt den Kosmos* (Tomczak et al., 2018).

The actual beginning of the reconstruction process of the Garrison Church began in 1984 Iserlohn, West Germany initiated by right-wing extremist Lieutenant Colonel Max Klaar (Oswalt, 2024). He founded the "Potsdam Glockenspiel Tradition Society" (TPG), an association to campaign for the rebuilding of the *carillon of the Garrison Church* (*Glockenspiel der Garrisonkirche*). In the end, Klaar succeeded and was able to inaugurate the carillon in Iserlohn in the same year. However, the goal was to donate the carillon to the city of Potsdam in the event of a reunification of the GDR and the BDR to support the reconstruction of the Garrison Church. Although the carillon was switched off in 2019 due to growing criticism, it was placed under monument protection 2 years later (Oelschläger, 2021). In the meantime, right-wing radical online shops are selling recordings of the carillon (Oswalt, 2022).

With the fall of the Berlin Wall (9th November 1989), the association founded by Klaas was able to achieve its goal of collecting money as well as setting up the carillon in Potsdam. The association or the project was discussed or presented at the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) state party conference, gaining support for the reconstruction of the Garrison Church. In the same year, Klaas held talks with the CDU fraction in Potsdam and the then mayor, Horst Gramlich, who belonged to the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD), to be able to hand over the carillon to the city of Potsdam and also to set the reconstruction of the Garrison Church in motion. Finally, a year later, in 1991, the carillon was inaugurated, and Klaar himself was allowed to give a speech at the big ceremony, in a Bundeswehr uniform, although due to the political explosiveness, the city of Potsdam asked to avoid a military connotation of the church and the ceremony. Nevertheless, there were also occasional military symbols and flags to be seen, and yet the reaction of the press to the event was mainly positive. (Oswalt, 2023)

Critics accused Klaar and the traditional community of trivializing the historical significance of the church as a symbol of Prussian militarism and the Nazi era and of creating a "center of attraction for right-wing-extremists" (Noll, 2024). This criticism does not seem unjustified, considering that Klaar was chairman of an association of German soldiers to which a magazine belonged, in which he denied the German invasion of the Soviet Union and Poland (Messmer, 2013). Nevertheless, it was not until 2004 that church and social groups distanced themselves from the right-wing extremist lieutenant and the millions of dollars in donations he had collected for Garrison Church over time. But there was still a Garrison Church Foundation with some well-known figures from Christian/Protestant and political circles who were

campaigning for funds to rebuild the chapel of the church. In October 2017, the construction of the tower began, albeit with a delay, against which there were also protests. (Tomczak et al., 2018)

A few days after the chapel was finished in spring 2024, again accompanied by protests, the field research of this master's thesis began in Potsdam. I was thus able to become aware on-site why it is not only a new building but much more a contested symbol of social and, above all, political conflicts.

4.1.2 The Rechenzentrum as Contested Urban Space



Figure 13: The Rechenzentrum around 1980, view to the Northeast © Potsdam information, 1980 image via Lernort Garrisonkirche, <https://lernort-garrisonkirche.de/architektur-des-rechenzentrums/> (accessed July 1, 2025)

Historical Context

The history of the former data center, commonly referred to as the "Rechenzentrum" by locals, is rooted in the GDR government's broader plans to digitize the entire republic. Its aim was the realization of computer-driven socialism, an effort to optimize the struggling planned economy through emerging technologies (Schmitt, 2020). Designed by a collective of architects led by Sepp Weber, the Rechenzentrum in Potsdam was constructed between 1969 and 1971 (König, 2020). In terms of urban planning, the former data center was not only relevant for the socialist main thoroughfare but also served as a symbol of the "scientific-technical revolution" (König, 2020). Following the German reunification of the GDR and the Federal German Republic (FDR) in 1989, many characteristic GDR-era buildings in Potsdam were demolished. These included the *Haus des Reisens*, a high-rise apartment block that also housed a state-run tourist bureau, and the University of Applied Sciences. By the 2010s, only a few GDR buildings remained in the city center, such as the *Staudenhof*

⁹ and the Rechenzentrum. But with the end of the Cold War and the reunification of the GDR and the FDR in 1989 the political development of East Germany changed drastically and so did the role of the Rechenzentrum in Potsdam as well.



Figure 12: "Der Mensch bezwingt den Kosmos" mosaic by Fritz Eisel, 1972 (LHP, © Dirk Alexander Schermer, n.d.)

The image, including its title, is strongly hinting towards the Soviet goal of achieving supremacy in space, winning the so-called Space Race against the US and therefore also manifesting Social-Communism as the dominant ideology during the Cold War. This Mosaic is protected through monument protection, but the RZ building is not. Although mayor Mike Schubert (SPD) considered to protect the whole RZ building through monument protection but politicians like Wieland Niekisch (CDU) pledged against this idea referring to an official decision from 2016, which excludes 14 GDR-buildings including the RZ (Kirf, 2021).

The Rechenzentrum, a prefabricated building located on Breite Street near the site of the former Garrison Church, has been used by artists and members of Potsdam's creative scene since 2015. Civil initiatives have campaigned for its preservation, while the Garrison Church Foundation Potsdam and other pro-reconstruction groups have long maintained that the city had already agreed to its demolition. The historical value of the Rechenzentrum is contested. It features a prominent communist mosaic titled *Der Mensch bezwingt (man conquering the cosmos)* created in 1972 by artist Fritz

⁹ The Staudenhof was a residential complex built and used in the GDR in the center of Potsdam, characterized by contiguous green courtyards. The demolition of the building complex began in the winter of 2023 following a controversial decision by the city council. Despite protests from local initiatives and opposition groups, the site is currently being cleared for future residential and commercial development. (Kramer & Müller, 2024) Kramer, L., & Müller, T. (2024, January 15). *Abriss des Staudenhofs in vollem Gange. Märkische Allgemeine*. <https://www.maz-online.de/potsdam/staudenhof-abgerissen-2024> [01.07.2025]

Eisel. The artwork propagandistically celebrates the “scientific and technological revolution” in communist societies and the utopian ideal of continuous progress (Eckersley & Vos, 2022). The mosaic image shows a person in a space suit connected to a space probe, standing upside down. In the background, the blue planet Earth introducing a hierarchy of this single Soviet person overlooking the entire planet.

In 2008, protests of teenagers and young adults occurred, which were triggered by the closure of several socio-cultural places and youth places. This led to some protesters joining forces and articulating themselves against displacement and a right to the parts of the inner city. (Oelschläger, 2014, as cited in Tomczak et al., 2018). As a consequence of the protests, a local debate emerged, centering on the question of necessary and desirable functions of an inner city while also discussing the relevance and hierarchy of aesthetic, urban planning, and commemorative policy. This debate was mainly coordinated by the "Potsdamer Mitte neu denken" initiative in 2015, the citizens' petition *Kein Ausverkauf der Potsdamer Mitte* in 2016 and the "Stadtmitte für Alle" alliance founded in 2017. (Tomczak et al., 2018, p. 237).

During the research interviews in May 2024, the topic of the need for public space and more support for civic projects in Potsdam was also mentioned in the interviews. Protests caused by the elimination of spaces for artists were followed former mayor Jann Jakobs, who offered that the RZ building could be used temporarily for three years, leading to the founding of the RZ in 2014. This is how the RZ was used from 2015 onwards (Engel S.; Armbruster, 2024). According to Jann Jakobs, the use of the building was intended to create a space that would be available to the creative scene in Potsdam (Oelschläger, 2015). But the Rechenzentrum changed from a space only used for cultural events and affordable space for artists to a socio-creative center to an institution providing space and social services, e.g., offering language courses for refugees and migrants.



Figure 14: The Rechenzentrum next to the Garrison Church chapel construction (Franke, 2023)

Current Usage of the Rechenzentrum as a Socio-Creative Center

The Rechenzentrum was taken over in 2015, originally with a limitation of three years. What initially began as a place for art and culture has developed significantly in the years that followed: In addition to artistic and creative activities, social and educational offers were increasingly added. Despite its growing profile, the future of the Rechenzentrum has always been uncertain, as it has limited resources.

About 20% of the building stands on a plot of land that belongs to the Garrison Church Foundation. Compared to other applicants, the RZ was able to take over the building at significantly more favorable conditions. The operation of the house is financed entirely by rental income – there are no public subsidies. In April 2024, the warm rent was 10.30 euros per square meter.

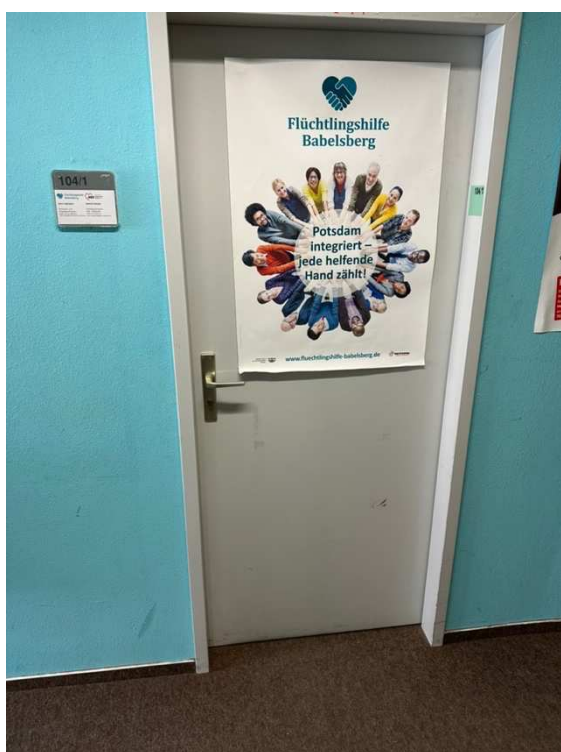


Figure 15: Office door of the "Flüchtlingshilfe Babelsberg" (own photograph, April 2024)



Figure 15: Office door of the AWO. Information on language courses, Office for Child Poverty and volunteering (own photograph, April 2024)

In recent years, the RZ has developed into a lively place of social participation. It is involved in refugee aid, regularly organizes concerts, courses, festivals and the "Erzählcafé". The demand for rooms is high - all rooms are occupied; a waiting list already exists. During the field phase in April 2024, it was possible to attend both concerts and established formats that have been an integral part of the program in the Rechenzentrum for some time. Figure 16 shows three examples: a public jam session for FLINTA¹⁰ people, the weekly *Erzählcafé* and the *Kosmoskantine*. The meals at *Kosmoskantine* are cooked by people from Ukraine every Friday; can be eaten for a voluntary donation. The proceeds will then benefit aid projects for Ukraine. In a document published in 2019 that advocates the preservation of the building, the RZ presents key aspects that illustrate its character and social added value. The translated content has been summarized in figure 15 below.

¹⁰ Women, lesbians, intersex people, non-binary people, trans people, and asexual people.

The RZ is a place of maximum Openness and High Diversity

- Offers low-threshold access
- Provides spaces for both short- and long-term use
- Offers affordable rents
- Users come from all segments of the city's society
- The Rechenzentrum's activities are aimed at the entire urban society
- Generates community and economic value
- It's a place for civil society engagement
- Brings together new groups, generates new formats, creates new social mixtures: A place in the city center for and from the core of (urban) society
- The RZ creates synergies
- Therefore: A place for integration and inclusion

Figure 16: The Rechenzentrum's benefits for Potsdam (adapted from RZ, 2019, own design)

Despite the diverse social, spatial, and economic added values that the RZ claims for itself, it has been the subject of urban political disputes for several years. Proponents of the Garrison Church perceive the already built chapel as aesthetically successful and interpret it as a symbol of peace and reconciliation (Rietz, 2018). In the following, it is explained in more detail which political lines of conflict and actor constellations characterize the urban political dispute and what effects this has on the future of the Rechenzentrum.

RZ	APPELL FÜRS RZ	SOZIOKREATIVES (R)ZENTRUM	TERMINE	MIETEN	DEBATTE & ZUKUNFT	WIR & KONTAKT
JUNI 24		FEMM JAM – FLINTA* JAM UND KREATIV-SESSION 24.06.2025 / 20:00 – 23:55 Begegnung, Femm Jam, Inklusion, Mitmachen, Musik Die Femm Jam ist eine öffentliche Jam Session für musikbegeisterte FLINTA*-Personen (Frauen, Lesben, inter*, trans*, nicht-binäre, agender und Andere). Bei der Femm Jam wollen wir ein erwartungs- und angstfreies Zusammentreffen ermöglichen um miteinander Musik zu machen und andere kreative Schaffensprozesse auszuprobieren. Die Femm Jam möchte ein Ort der Begegnung, Vernetzung, Kollaboration, des Empowerments sein. Es ...				
JUNI 26		ERZÄHLCAFÉ 26.06.2025 / 17:00 – 19:00 Begegnung, Familie Jeden Donnerstag // Im Kosmos oder Innenhof				
JUNI 27		KOSMOS-ІДАЛЬНЯ // KOSMOSKANTINE 27.06.2025 / 12:00 – 14:00 Begegnung, Essen, Familie, Kosmoskantine Jeden Freitag // Spendenempfehlung mind. 6€				

Figure 16: Online event calendar of the RZ (RZ, 2025, own design)

The Political Controversy Surrounding the Rechenzentrum

But political conflicts continue to accompany the Rechenzentrum to this day. Just a few days after the field phase of this research began, the controversial chapel of the Garrison Church was completed and consecrated. Around 250 people protested in front of the Garrison Church against the allocation of further funds for the reconstruction of the church. They also demanded the dissolution of the Garrison Church Foundation. (Tomczak et al., 2018)

Since 2017, the chapel of the Garrison Church has been financed under the patronage of the Federal President of Germany, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, mainly with money from the public sector (Oswalt, 2023). More than half of the 40-million-euro project is being paid for by the public sector. In particular, the former Minister of State for Culture Monika Grütters (CDU), who was succeeded by Claudia Roth (Green Party) after the change of government, had pushed through millions in subsidies for the "project of national importance" (Zschieck, 2022).

In Potsdam, the public is divided between those who want to restore the baroque Garrison Church and those who favour keeping the Rechenzentrum and the mosaic (König, 2020, p. 91). Some argue that the conflict over the church is a proxy for the larger, escalating tension in a growing city between the wealthy and the poor, between palaces and tower block buildings, and between long-time residents and newcomers (Radke, 2014). "However, since parts of the house are located on the property of the Garrison Church Foundation, the continued use depends on their consent" (Tomczak et al., 2018, p. 234). The remaining and larger part of the Rechenzentrum is located on municipal land (Engel A., 2024). As a compromise between the Garrison Church Foundation and the RZ the mayor Mike Schubert (SPD) supported a plan to build a *Haus der Demokratie* located where the complete church is planned to be rebuilt (Zschieck, 2022). This building would have included a new plenary room for the city parliament (ibid.). But next year, the so-called *Kreativquartier* will be opened, which is to become a new home for artists and the creative scene (Oelschläger 2025). But it is still no longer possible to say with certainty what costs the people there will have to pay (Armbruster, 2024; Engel A. 2024).

The conflict surrounding the Garrison Church and the RZ has persisted for a long time, and it raises the question of whether the architectural legacy of the GDR should be preserved and whether Potsdam's baroque city center truly needs to be restored. This adds another layer to the already ongoing conflict. The dispute at hand is obviously of interest to a wide range of parties, as it concerns much more than "simply" the future of urban growth in Potsdam. Instead, as can be seen from the fact that both national and local money are involved, political, economic, and urban planning

concerns are materializing as a protracted battle that is expanding in scope and relevance.

There is a significant conflict between those who desire to restore the city to its Prussian-era appearance, which they believe would enhance its beauty, and others who have different visions for the city's future. This ongoing conflict, confirmed by city planners, reflects the uncertainty about the city's direction that many participants expressed during interviews as well.



Figure 17: The Rechenzentrum and the Garrison Church Chapple in 2024 (© Kristina Tschesch, 2024, provided through personal communication)

The Rechenzentrum has become a focal point of urban political conflicts, particularly concerning the Garrison Church, due to a confluence of historical, ideological, and socio-political factors. The Garrison Church, a site with a contentious history, especially its role during the National Socialist era, symbolizes militarism, monarchy, and Prussian values, but not for everybody. Its reconstruction, partially funded by federal money, has been driven by actors often associated with the right-wing political spectrum, raising concerns about the underlying interests in restoring such a symbol. This endeavor not only signifies an attempt to revive a contentious historical narrative but also necessitates the demolition of existing GDR-era buildings, further complicating the urban landscape and memory politics.

Simultaneously, the Rechenzentrum has emerged as a vibrant hub for Potsdam's arts and creative communities. This repurposed space is now home to numerous artists and creatives who view it as essential for their work and community. The proposed

demolition of the RZ to make way for the Garrison Church has therefore sparked significant opposition, highlighting the conflict between preserving spaces for accessible usage and the rebuilding of historical Prussian monuments.

Additionally, this conflict is exacerbated by broader urban development issues in Potsdam, such as high rents and the lack of affordable spaces for vulnerable populations. The debate around the Garrison Church and the Rechenzentrum is not merely about architecture or heritage; it reflects deeper societal tensions about identity, memory, and the future direction of the city's development. Thus, the controversy surrounding the Rechenzentrum encapsulates a microcosm of larger urban political struggles in Potsdam, where historical narratives, socio-economic disparities, and cultural priorities intersect and often collide.

During the month-long field research, I was able to identify election posters throughout the city, which often also referred to the RZ and the baroque restoration of the city, as can be seen in Figure 16. Figure 17 shows a flyer of the "Antifascist Network Potsdam" (*Antifaschistische Vernetzung Potsdam*) advertising a demonstration against the opening of the church and the opening of the newly built tower. Explicit reference is made to nationalist socialism, the glorification of the Prussian era, and the German colonial era. The conflict between the Garrison Church and the former data center is multifaceted, encompassing various dimensions that must be considered. It extends far beyond the simple question of which building should remain or be constructed. A closer examination of the stakeholders and parties involved reveals a stark opposition between right-wing and left-wing factions, each striving to shape Potsdam in line with their visions.



Figure 18: Flyer of the "Antifascist Network Potsdam" (own photograph, April 2024)



Figure 19: Election advertisement in front of the Garrison Church chapel and the RZ (own photograph, April 2024)

This political and ideological conflict is also quite visible in media discourses. For instance, the Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg¹¹ (RBB) produced a portrait of Andreas Kalbitz, who, at the time, was the top candidate of the "Alternative für Deutschland" (AfD), a far-right populist party. He was centering his electoral campaign on Prussian virtues, drawing on the legacy of modesty, discipline, and punctuality. He emphasized Prussia's pioneering role in social insurance under Bismarck to appeal to voters. Kalbitz's admiration for Prussia reflected his and the AfD's ideological stance, which aligns with conservative and nationalist values. Despite his controversial past connections to extreme right-wing groups, Kalbitz used the historical image of Prussia to resonate with voters who yearn for a return to traditional values and order. His campaign underscores a desire to "complete the reunification process" (*Vollenden der Wende*) as preserving and revitalizing Prussian tradition in local politics. Figure 19 shows Kalbitz's election advertisement for the AfD faction in the Brandenburg state parliament, referring directly to Garrison Church. He advocates that public federal funds should be used for the reconstruction of the church, as this building would be an integral part of Brandenburg's history. But he

¹¹ The Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg RBB is the public broadcaster of the two federal states Berlin and Brandenburg.

goes even further and accuses the Left Party of continuing the tradition of the Socialist Unity Party¹² (SED).



Figure 20: Andreas Kalbitz (AfD) promoting the Garrison Church (Oswalt, 2023, p. 103)

Other AfD politicians, including Dennis Hohloch, a member of Brandenburg's parliament, who unsuccessfully ran for mayor in 2018, also publicly commented on his position on the Rechenzentrum. In an interview with the *Märkische Allgemeine Zeitung*, Hohloch took a clear position: The RZ, like many other buildings in Potsdam, stands for socialism and should therefore make way for the reconstruction of the Garrison Church (Röd, 2018). A few years later 2024, Hohloch and other members of his party were classified as right-wing extremists by the Federal Ministry of the Interior (rbb, 2024).

But these political actors are not in the foreground when it comes to deciding on the future of the Rechenzentrum. The Garrison Church plays an essential role because it owns 20% of land on which the RZ is located. The current mayor Mike Schubert of the SPD announced at the beginning of April 2025 that another 5-year use of the Rechenzentrum could not be implemented. Without the extension, the building would have to be vacated in January 2026 and demolished under the development plan. The Garrison Church pointed out that the new creative quarter will create an alternative space for the artists. (Oelschläger, 2025)

But there are also headwind and prominent people from civil society as well as politics, church and administration are also campaigning for its continued use. (Richter, 2025) In the meantime, almost 2600 people have already signed to prevent

¹² The Socialist Unity Party of the former GDR was organized on the Soviet Union party. It was quite restrictive and although other parties existed, they had no power as the SED was the ruling party in a one-party system (Tipton, 2003)

the demolition (Kramer, 2025). In addition, the renovation costs would amount to 7.3 million euros in order to be able to maintain the building (Degener & Oelschläger, 2019). Thus, the future of the RZ remains uncertain, although at the moment it looks as if the destruction of the building is imminent. At the same time, the past and history of the RZ have shown that civil society engagement has had a great influence on how low-threshold space can be defended. Thus, it will only become clear in a few months how this special building can continue to exist in its current socio-creative civil society role or how it will have to give way to political and economic pressure.

At its core, the dispute between the Garrison Church and the Rechenzentrum is one of existence and the political future that materializes within the architecture of the city. The political intensity of this dispute is further heightened by the historical background of Potsdam, which encompasses Prussia, the GDR, and contemporary times. The argument is sharply divided between proponents and opponents of the many plans for the future look of the city, encompassing larger divisions like left against right and conservative versus progressive. The struggle between these two structures, which exposes Potsdam's fault lines, is a manifestation of these binaries. But it's not just black and white; there are many more facets and complexities to the subject. The articles that have been analyzed provide very little attention to the real work that these institutions do. The RZ is commonly referred to as an arts and creativity center where artists pursue their work. While this is accurate, the RZ has intentionally rebranded itself as a "socio-creative house," a newly coined term in German, to better represent what the Rechenzentrum does.

4.2 Answering the Research Questions

4.2.1 Potsdam – A City for Everyone?

This section describes the results of the first research question¹³, which is focused on understanding Potsdam's perception of an inclusive city. This approach specifically highlights Potsdam's self-proclaimed inclusive identity and its stated measures against poverty, as outlined in the selected documents presented in chapter 3. The objective is to identify how poverty, social exclusion, and participation are discussed and addressed. This context is crucial for a comprehensive analysis of the city's inclusion efforts. The methodology involved a two-stage coding process using MAXQDA software. Initially, documents were coded, and then similar codes were

¹³ How does Potsdam perceive the concept of "A City for Everyone" (*Eine Stadt für Alle*) for itself, and which population groups are primarily referenced in relation to this aim?

merged and refined. This process led to the creation of three document portraits and the identification of nine main themes, presented in Table 5.

The identified themes span both material concerns, such as financial poverty and accessibility, and immaterial aspects like discrimination, xenophobia, and justice. The frequency and emphasis on different themes and population groups vary significantly across the analyzed documents. This variation is attributed to the diverse nature of the documents themselves. Each document conceives its own scope, aims, and priorities, since it is a city development concept, a poverty report and an outlined mission statement.

Theme	Subcodes	Application Criteria
Accessibility	People with addictive disorders, People who need nursing care, People with disabilities	Applied when referring to people with diseases or disabilities are mentioned.
City Development	Mobility, Social Infrastructure, Innovation, Administration, Population Growth, Segregation	Applied when referring to urban resources and urban development aspects are addressed.
Exclusion	Discrimination, Xenophobia	Applied when referring to types of social exclusion are addressed.
Gender	Gender-specifics, Sexuality	Applied when referring to aspects of gender and sexuality are addressed.
Generational Equity & Family	Single parents, Seniors, Children	Applied when family-related or generational aspects are discussed.
Housing	Affordable housing, Housing market, Accessible Housing, Rent	Applied when referring to issues relating to housing, rents, housing conditions, and the associated social and economic challenges.
Equity, Inclusion & Participation	Inclusion, Community, Participation, Equality & Inequality, Diversity, Justice	Applied when referring to concepts are addressed that include participation and inclusion.
Migration	Asylum seekers, People without German citizenship, People with a migration background	Applied when referring to topics related to immigration, asylum seekers, or people with a migration background.
Poverty	Dramatic increase of people with social difficulties, Unemployed People, Recipients of social welfare benefits, Spatial distribution of children affected by poverty, Old-age poverty	Applied when referring to material or financial disadvantage and poverty are addressed, especially with regard to access to resources, money, and opportunities.

Table 5: Codes and themes of the document analysis (own design)

The *Mission Statement* covers many groups in the context of social marginalization and inclusion, but only briefly on one page. However, the *Mission Statement* is a very short document and not as comprehensive as the report on poverty or the *INSEK 2035*. Only one page that presented the “one city for everyone”-concept was therefore analyzed. In contrast, the poverty report contains a distinctly defined chapter consisting of 13 pages. The *INSEK 2035*, on the other hand, includes 29 pages that were coded and analyzed, as it addresses a *city for everyone* several times.

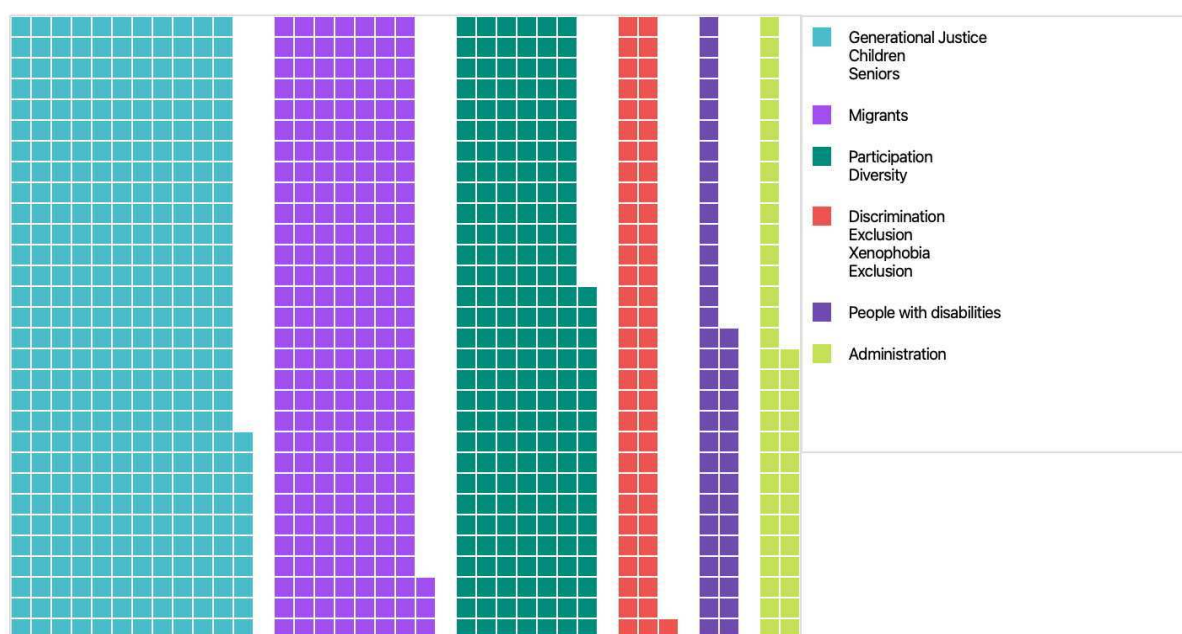


Figure 21: Visualization of coded segments of the *Mission Statement* (visualized using MAXQDA, own design)

Looking at Figure 21 presenting the coded sections of the *Mission Statement* seniors, intergenerational justice, and children are of particular relevance for an inclusive Potsdam. Furthermore, the welcoming of immigrants comprises a large part of the material as well. Even though many marginalized groups are mentioned in the analyzed section of this short brochure, the paragraphs do not go into specific detail, which could possibly be attributed to the fact that it is only a short document. Nevertheless, no mention or discussion of poverty can be found here or on any other pages of the document. Discrimination and all forms of exclusion are rejected, but not explicitly in the context of material deprivation.

The city positions itself against xenophobia and is committed to an open, diverse society. “Potsdam is a city of diversity, equal opportunities, and tolerance for all people, regardless of lifestyle, age, gender, disability, origin, culture, faith, sexual orientation, and income” (LHP, 2016, p. 2). It recognizes the different needs of younger and older people and emphasizes the need to respond to them spatially and structurally. Places of encounter are highlighted as the basis for community, even if concrete measures are not named, which is not unusual for a brochure like this one. Nevertheless, most of them are dedicated to migration and family related subjects.

Even though this first brief document does not result in any deeper implications for discussion, it offers an initial overview of the population groups and topics with which the city of Potsdam would like to appear to the public.

The analyzed segments within the *INSEK 2035* reveal that children, single parents, and senior citizens are often addressed in the context of the aimed urban development until 2035, as shown in Figure 22. First and foremost, the comprehensive document presented the physical urban planning development aspects, but in some paragraphs, it discussed certain population groups more than others. Children and seniors are in the foreground of the associated measures. In particular, justice, innovation, and community form the guardrails of a *Potsdam for everyone* (LHP, 2022a, p. 115). With the help of these three concepts, both infrastructural measures, such as sports fields or the improvement of internet infrastructures, are linked to

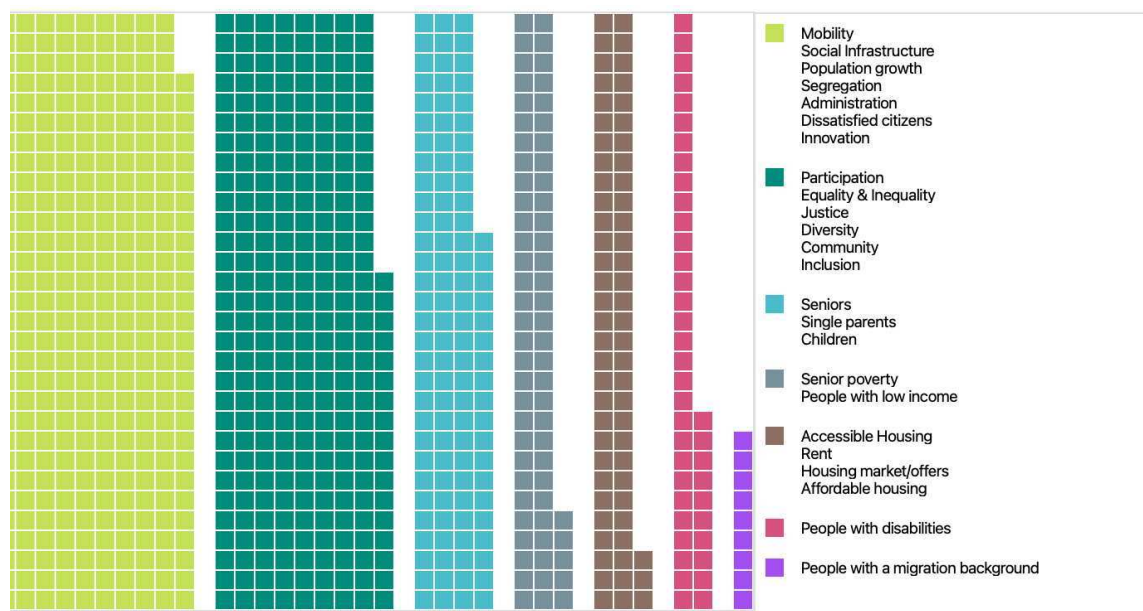


Figure 22: Document Portrait of the *INSEK 2035* (visualized using MAXQDA, own design)

concepts of diversity, tolerance and access to public urban goods. Certain groups of people were also mentioned, but not too much in detail, in particular parents, children, and seniors. In comparison, groups such as people with disabilities or migrants are hardly present. Nevertheless, it is striking that, for example, the word "senior" appears 40 times, the words "children" *Kinder* and "youth" *Jugend* appear 53 times in the entire *INSEK 2035*, and yet the words "migration" or "migrant" appear merely once in the whole document, which in total consists of 255 pages. This raises the question of why some groups take up significantly more space in the plans of the *INSEK 2035*. Despite experiencing documented forms of structural exclusion, certain groups, like those with disabilities or those with a migration background, receive little attention, which could prolong already existing inequalities, or these topics in connection with

the future city development are given different degrees of relevance by the city's administration.

The *Poverty Report* (2022) is a very detailed and comprehensive analysis of the socioeconomic situation in Potsdam. It looks at different population groups, in particular people with very low incomes or those who need support by the state through social services and money. Spatial aspects are also considered, such as the question of which neighborhoods are home to more welfare recipients.

A large part of the report, especially the chapter on target groups, is devoted to the topics of poverty in old age, child poverty, and poverty in families. Single-parent households in particular are considered to be at high risk of poverty. Poverty in old age is also highlighted as a central issue, as the proportion of people over 65 will increase significantly in the coming years. Gender-specific differences are also addressed: Overall, women are more likely to be affected by poverty than men (LHP, 2022b, p. 170). Subjects such as housing, livelihood, asylum, and basic security, the need for support has increased overall in recent years. The migration background also plays an important role: the number of people with non-German citizenship has risen sharply since 2010. Many of them live in districts with an increased risk of poverty and are disproportionately dependent on benefits under the Asylum Seekers Benefits Act or other forms of basic security.

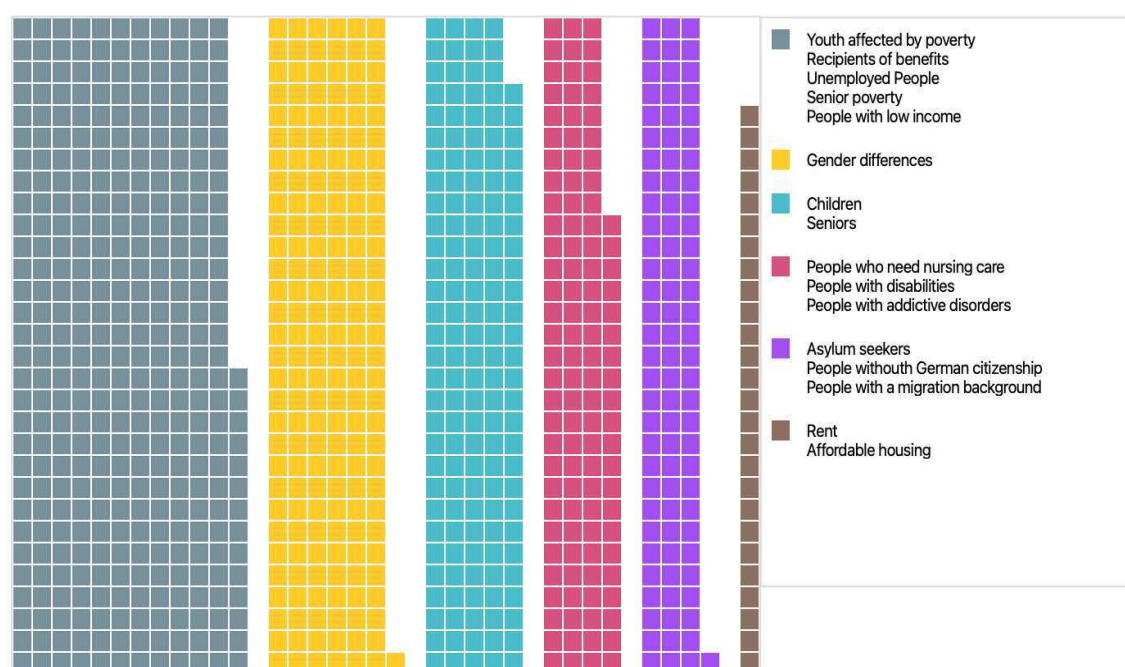


Figure 23: Visualization of coded segments the Poverty Report (visualized using MAXQDA, own design)

The poverty report describes how social and economic disadvantages are concentrated in certain groups and districts. Poverty poses spatial challenges for Potsdam and its future development and planning that must be addressed. Potsdam aims to counteract spatial segregation; however, the proportion of people affected by old-age poverty is expected to rise significantly (LHP, 2022a, p.94). This highlights the need for targeted measures in neighborhoods that are disproportionately impacted to promote inclusive urban development.

Here, too, however, it is noticeable that children and senior citizens people in particular cover the most content. According to the report, it is expected that more people will live in poverty in old age in the future. This is also justified by the existing gap between East and West Germany. Overall, there is expected to be a significant increase in old-age poverty in eastern Germany (ibid.).

Men are disproportionately represented in recipients of old-age basic income support and support due to reduced earning capacity. Between 2010 and 2020, there was a notable rise in male recipients, while female recipients saw a slight decrease. Conversely, women tend to have lower median incomes and face higher poverty risks, even though they constitute a larger portion of older age groups.

Girls generally achieve better educational outcomes than boys, demonstrating higher rates of school transitions and graduation. A greater percentage of girls enter Gymnasium (a type of secondary school leading to university) and attain higher qualifications. Boys, however, are more frequently affected by learning and developmental challenges, as indicated by early childhood screenings.

Gender differences are also evident in addiction. Men are more commonly affected by excessive media use and gambling addiction, whereas women more frequently experience alcohol-related disorders.

Women are slightly more represented among individuals with disabilities, largely due to age-related factors. However, men are more likely to receive integration or support services. In summary, the report underscores that poverty and social vulnerability manifest differently for men and women, influenced by a complex interplay of structural, demographic, and socio-cultural factors.

The spatial distribution of poverty and people who live under difficult socioeconomic situations are also particularly revealing: the proportion of benefit recipients varies significantly depending on the social area. Some districts have a far above-average rate, which indicates a spatial concentration of socioeconomic problems and shortages. (LHP, 2022b, p. 94). There is significant challenge for the city of Potsdam in this area, which must be addressed.

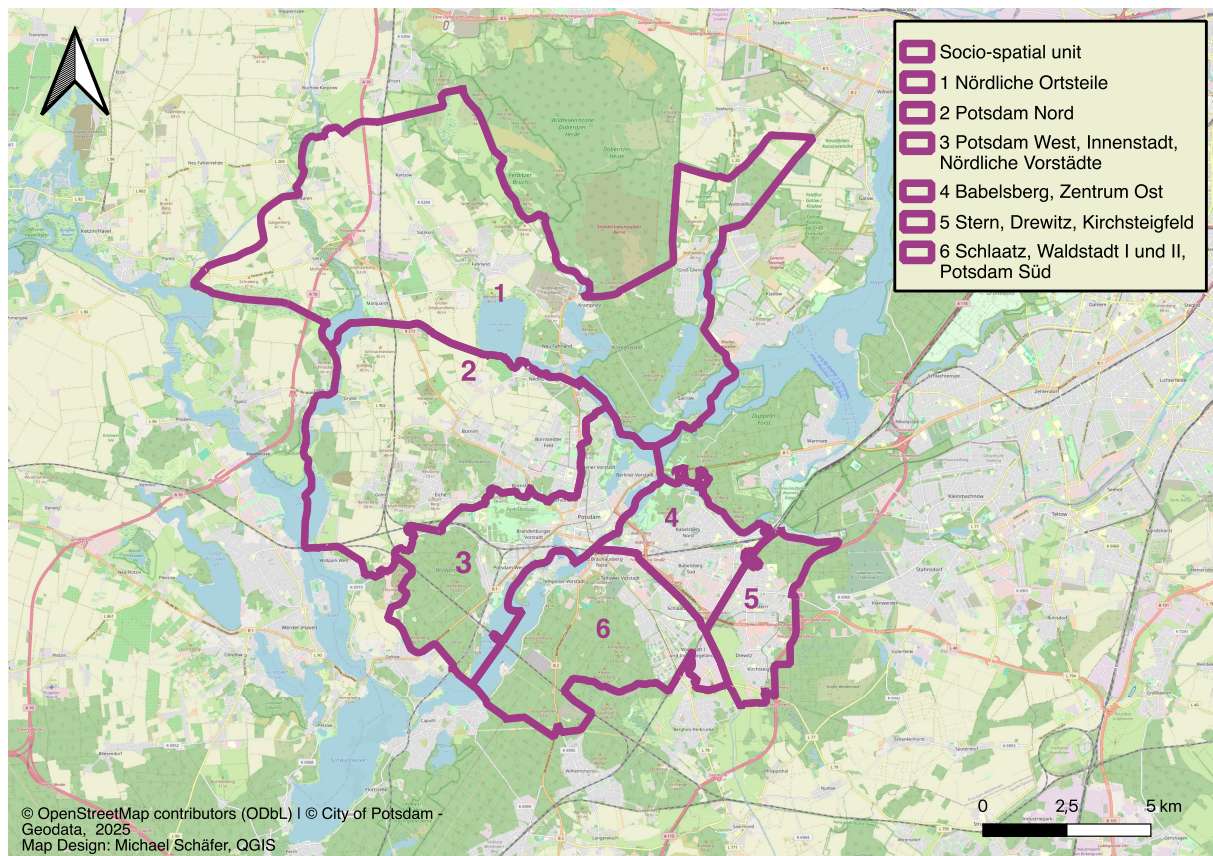


Figure 24: Map of socio-spatial units of Potsdam (visualized using QGIS, own design)

Figure 24 shows a map of Potsdam showing the six different socio-spatial units that are referred to in the *poverty report* and the *INSEK 2035*. In particular, the sixth social area *Schlaatz, Waldstadt I and II, Potsdam Süd* stands out in terms of poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage. In 2020, it recorded the highest rate of people receiving social benefits (LHP, 2022b, p. 166) and also the most social benefit recipients without German citizenship (LHP, 2022b, p. 177). Furthermore, this area also had the highest rate of children living in families with a certificate of eligibility for housing or being entitled to it (LHP, 2022b, p. 164). And the proportion of people over 65 years of age is also highest there at 23% (LHP, 2022b, p. 165). This social area also confirms the north-south divide and the conspicuous segregation in Potsdam.

The Rechenzentrum is located in the socio-spatial unit three *Potsdam West, Innenstadt, Nördliche Vorstädte* (*West Potsdam, City Center, Northern Suburbs*). The city center, but also the district Babelsberg, are characterized in particular by a mixture of residential and commercial use (LHP, 2022a, p. 56). The future priorities are to promote a lively city center and social cohesion (LHP, 2022a, p. 31). The aim is to strengthen trade and services, but also to promote cultural and scientific use. In addition, through traffic is to be reduced and public urban spaces are to be created (ibid.)

The documents show how the city of Potsdam positions itself with regard to its development of urban society. They also reveal how Potsdam perceives itself and how it wants to be perceived from the outside: as tolerant, cosmopolitan, innovative, and just. That's how Potsdam wants to be; that's how it claims it is. Certainly, the claim to be inclusive is present, yet categories and groups of people who are emphasized and those who are not indicate true priorities, which perhaps reflect the social context or perhaps work to reinforce it. There is an obvious claim of the city to be inclusive, which is not surprising. One can identify many social confessions and goals targeting marginalized communities.

It also fits with the research of Anttiroiko and De Jong (2020), i.e., showing the increasing popularity for cities to frame themselves as inclusive. The development of inclusive cities on a global scale cannot be reconciled with a motivation for economic redistribution in order to respond to injustice. Caused by liberal labor markets or low taxes for the rich, resulting in societal instability, it would have to be countered with macroeconomic measures and an active promotion and involvement of civil society organizations and actors that promote common prosperity. (Anttiroiko & De Jong, 2020)

Potsdam is currently and will be confronted with complex challenges, as became very clear in the interview with the city planners. These include an aging urban society, poverty of senior citizens, the growth of the city, and insufficient budgets of the municipalities. Potsdam wants to enable more participation and protect marginalized people from exclusion and discrimination. Everyone should be able to lead a good life in Potsdam, so to speak. The motives make sense, and the highlighting of target groups, such as pensioners, for example, can be understood since this is a group that will grow strongly in the future.

A notable observation is that seniors are mentioned significantly more often in the INSEK 2035 than in other groups. Just like seniors and family-related groups and subjects also play a major role in the mission statement. The city of Potsdam estimates that the number of people aged 65 and over will rise to 43,092, which is an increase by 31% until the year 2040 (LHP, 2022b, p. 165). More than 20 percent of Potsdam's population is over the age of 65 (ibid.) and the city's population is aging, making issues such as old-age poverty and accessibility increasingly important.

A key finding of the analysis is that the groups identified in the poverty report that are particularly affected by poverty are also mentioned in the other documents in the context of the *one city for everyone*. However, these groups are not explicitly discussed in a context of poverty in these strategic documents, but rather in the context of inclusion and discrimination or structural accessibility. The urban INSEK 2035 also focuses in particular on structural and planning aspects. But here, too, the

question must be asked why poverty in old age is at the core of the poverty problem and plays a dominant role in urban development issues.

In addition to senior citizens, younger people, and women more than men are more likely to be affected by poverty. Furthermore, people with a migration background and people with disabilities, as well as single parents, have a higher risk of poverty compared to the majority of society. (LHP, 2022, p. 183)

This is also verified by individual interviews with people from non-profit organizations. The increase in people with low incomes who have just retired is explicitly mentioned (Geschwäntner, 2024).

The topics of migration and refuge are also addressed concerning poverty in Potsdam. Since 2015, the influx of refugees has led to a 60% increase in people without German citizenship (LHP, 2022b, p. 2). In total, there were 189 people claiming asylum seeker benefits between 2010 and 2020 for every 1,116 people (LHP, 2022b, p. 21). This demographic shift presents ongoing challenges for the city of Potsdam in addition to the growing older population. In response, it must develop urban planning strategies and services that reflect both population growth and demographic change to address the diverse needs of its evolving population. A key finding is that despite the mention of the same groups in the different documents, the perspectives are different. While the poverty report undertakes an explicit socio-economic analysis, the *Mission Statement* focuses primarily on concepts of inclusion and accessibility without explicitly addressing poverty. Furthermore, the *INSEK 2035* mentions almost exclusively old-age poverty (LHP, 2022a, p. 94, 96). This leads to the question of the extent to which other forms of poverty are also considered in current and future urban planning. To this end, the various data and results will be triangulated later in this chapter to better understand cross-thematic relationships and connections.

Child poverty is also a present issue, which was addressed by social agencies, especially during the time of the coronavirus pandemic, according to their statements. Through the poverty report, also as the interviews, the topic of poverty in Potsdam was raised several times (Engel S., 2024; Gumberger, 2024; Geschwäntner, 2024).

The document analysis shows that the concept of the one city for everyone is primarily associated with underprivileged groups that are often affected by marginalization and exclusion. At the same time, the connections between poverty and inclusion are only addressed to a limited extent in the strategic urban development documents. But as we know, exclusion and poverty are interrelated concepts (Silver, 2007) which is why it is important to consider both aspects and the associated challenges together and to systematically take them into account in urban development planning. This is the

only way to create an inclusive city that actually fulfills the claim of being a city for everyone. Anttiroiko and De Jong (2020) also suggest that minorities should not only be thought of in terms of their difficulties and challenges, but more in terms of the skills and opportunities that these people bring to the table. It must be seen how this can be integrated into the joint design and participation for urban development.

4.2.2 Collaboration between Social Associations and the Rechenzentrum

The second research question¹⁴, is dedicated to the case study of the RZ and focuses on the collaborations between non-profit organizations and the Rechenzentrum. All forms and dimensions of cooperation are considered – from the shared use of space to interpersonal relationships and financial aspects. Table 6 presents the codes and 14 themes that were identified through the thematic analysis of the interviews.

Several participants highlighted the openness and inclusive culture of the Rechenzentrum, emphasizing that it is not "only" a space for artists but a place where all sorts of people are welcome (Chienku, 2024; Geschwäntner, 2024; Engel S., 2024). They appreciated the large, accessible space and the low-barrier entry for people from all walks of life. The diversity of both the people and the usage of the space was frequently mentioned, creating a vibrant community atmosphere. Participants also noted the benefit of low rent and the absence of profit-driven pressures, which allows for a more relaxed and creative environment. They remarked on the general lack of such spaces in Potsdam, stating how difficult it is to find a location like the Rechenzentrum that can accommodate a large number of people. One participant working with refugees made clear that if the Rechenzentrum did not exist anymore, it would lead to a loss of one-third of the people that are regularly visiting the *Erzählcafé*, which is a crucial meeting point for refugees and vulnerable newcomers in Potsdam located at the RZ. Furthermore, it would be difficult to find an alternative space to host the amount of people. "So it's a question that is already on my mind, what happens when the Rechenzentrum is no longer standing. Because then we have to move, we suspect a loss of about a third [...] We would now have to find an appropriate space. And that's just very difficult" (Klusmeyer, 2024).

¹⁴ Why do social associations serving vulnerable populations, affected by poverty and discrimination, utilize the Rechenzentrum's spaces and collaborate with it?

Themes	Subcodes	Criteria
Accessibility	People with disabilities, Physical accessibility, People with addictions, People needing nursing care, Accessible Housing	Applied when referring to barriers, or inclusion measures related to these specific groups or addresses accessible infrastructure/housing
Urban structure & institutional contexts	Public transport, Social infrastructure, Administration, Perception of an inclusive city, Segregation, Architectural city aesthetic, Kreativquartier, Location of RZ, RZ history	Applied when referring to the physical, functional, or symbolic aspects of urban infrastructure and city image, or directly discusses the RZ (its location, history, or function).
Conflict	Garrison Church, Usage/Location conflicts	Applied when referring to the Garrison Church or to tensions and debates around the use or location of urban spaces.
Concepts of Equity	Participation, Inclusion, Community, Equality & Inequality, Diversity/Mixture of different groups,	Applied when referring to any kind of concepts of participation, inclusion, community, equality and diversity.
Forms of Exclusion	Discrimination, Xenophobia, Exclusion	Applied when referring to social dynamics, participation, and group relations within the city, including experiences of inclusion/exclusion.
Family	Seniors, Children, Single parents	Applied when referring to needs, challenges, or policies concerning these specific demographic groups.
Financial Aspects	Taxes, Donations, Funding, Costs, Rent at the RZ	Applied when referring to financial aspects related to the RZ or broader urban development, including public/private funding or affordability.
Gender	Gender differences, Sexuality	Applied when referring to LGBTQIA+ topics are addressed, including social roles, access, representation, or discrimination.
Housing	Rent for housing, Housing market, Affordable Housing	Applied when referring to housing affordability, rent dynamics, market conditions, or access to housing.
Migration	Asylum seekers, Migrants	Applied when referring to discusses migration, integration, asylum policy, or the experiences and inclusion of migrants.

Politics	Political Parties/Parliamentary groups, Political values/viewpoints, Urban governance & Governance	Applied when referring to political actors, decision-making structures, ideologies, or administrative governance.
Poverty	Homeless people, Students, Child poverty, Recipients of welfare services, Senior poverty	Applied when referring to vulnerable social groups are discussed, especially regarding poverty or dependence on support systems.
Organizational Structures & Social Services	Services for seniors, services for youth affected by poverty, Services for migrants and asylum seekers, Collaboration & networks, Volunteers, Distribution and Usage of space at the RZ	Applied when referring to social services, support networks, volunteering, or the organization and use of space at the RZ.
Urban Planning	Inclusive neighborhood concept, Quality/Needs of life for/of citizens, Approaches of the urban planning department, Challenges for the urban planning department	Applied when referring to strategies, values, or practical aspects of planning inclusive urban neighborhoods or the role of urban planning institutions.

Table 6: Codes and themes of interview's (own design)

These aspects were particularly important to the participants in their work, as they collaborate with the RZ to provide support and opportunities to vulnerable individuals, including those facing economic challenges. The inclusive and supportive environment of the RZ significantly enhances their ability to assist and empower these individuals. The premises of the RZ are used for a diverse range of services aimed at different population groups. Many of these offers are implemented by external organizations such as *Kultur*¹⁵ or the *AWO*¹⁶, but the Rechenzentrum itself also offers its own formats and events. In addition, the rooms are available for a wide variety of events.

Particularly relevant are the central location and the comparatively favorable rental conditions, which contribute to a better accessibility. In addition to these material aspects, intangible dimensions such as a high degree of trust, openness and tolerance were also emphasized by the interview participants. The RZ enjoys a high degree of sympathy among users and cooperation partners. At the same time, however, challenges in external perception were also pointed out. For people who are not familiar with the RZ, it is often not clear at first glance what services are taking place there.

¹⁵ *Kultur*, organized by *Kulturwege e. V.*, provides cultural participation for individuals with low incomes.

¹⁶ The *AWO* is the umbrella organization for a variety of social initiatives and projects in Germany. In Potsdam the *AWO* is also responsible for the *Erzählcafé*, which supports vulnerable newcomers and work together with other organizations in the field of inclusion like the *Flüchtlingshilfe Babelsberg*, which also supports refugees and migrants.

Figure 21 shows a code map for the "Collaboration & networks" code as well as the codes that are close to it in all interview transcripts. It becomes clear that both material and immaterial aspects play a role when it comes to the cooperation of the Rechenzentrum with social organizations.

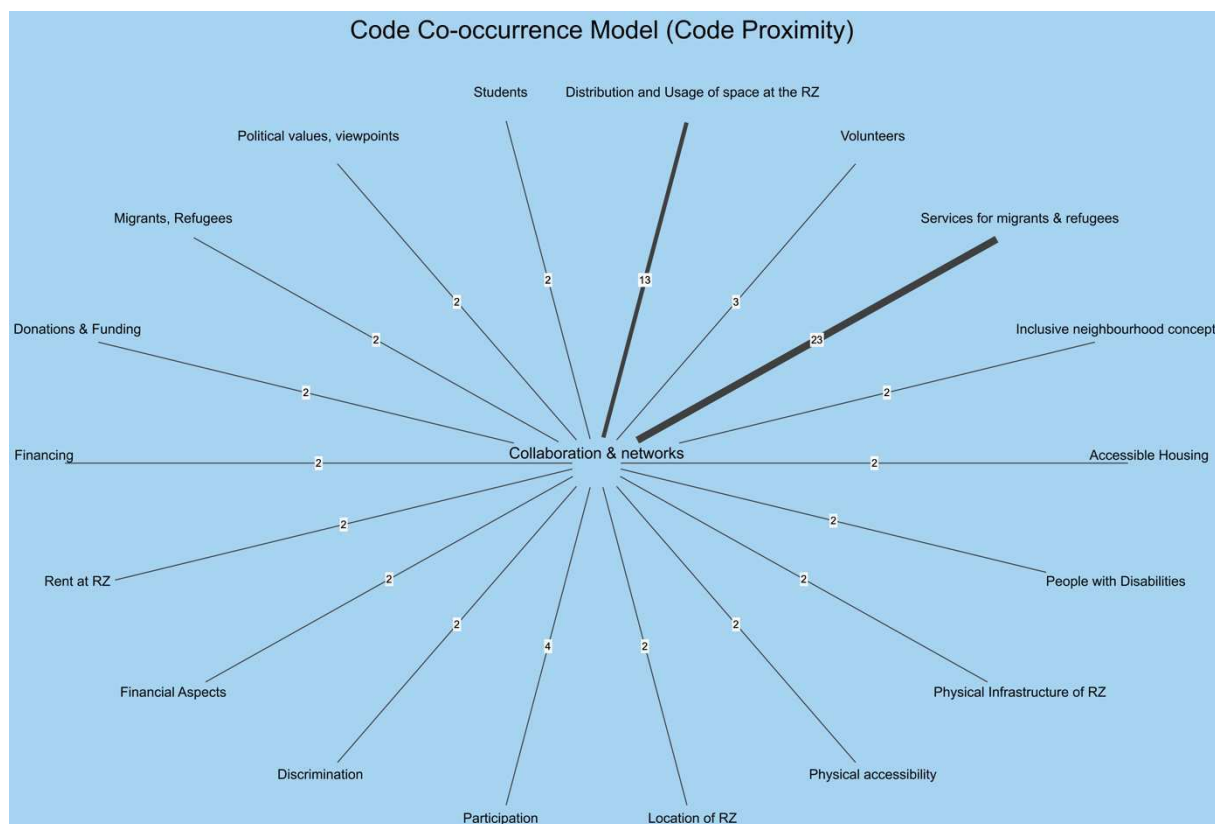


Figure 25: Collaboration & network code proximity (visualized using MAXQDA, own design)

4.2.3 Inclusion through the Rechenzentrum's Practices

In order to assess whether and to what extent the Rechenzentrum contributes to social and spatial inclusion, the analysis and interpretation are based on the definition of social and spatial inclusion. Regarding the inclusive urban development in Potsdam and the Rechenzentrens' self-perception as a „place of integration and inclusion“ (RZ, 2019, p. 6), the question arises as to whether both stakeholders are not essentially aiming for a common goal.

Groups of people who Potsdam would like to reach in a targeted manner as part of its inclusive urban development – such as people with a migration background who are new to the city and depend on free educational opportunities – will find connections and support in the computer center. This includes, among other things, assistance in finding accommodation or learning the German language. This will concretely expand their opportunities for participation.

The Rechenzentrum is a low threshold place whose access is not linked to a specific income, located in Potsdam's city center, making it an exception in a city characterized by high segregation. Since the Rechenzentrum is not profit-oriented, there is no commercial exploitation pressure. People with low incomes can participate here on an equal footing without having to restrict themselves.

Potsdam is growing and at the same time undergoing demographic change. The proportion of older people over the age of 65 is steadily increasing, as is the risk of poverty in old age. The city pursues the goal of enabling more intergenerational justice, family-friendliness and equal opportunities for children. A pronounced spatial segregation is already visible: wealthy and low-income people are increasingly living separately. In this context, publicly accessible spaces in which encounters can take place are gaining in importance.

Such meeting places must be socially organized and barrier-free. The computer center makes an important contribution here. Organizations such as *Kultur*, which have been explicitly praised in interviews, also contribute to the cultural participation of people with low incomes. It is crucial to understand social disadvantage as a multidimensional phenomenon: Although the challenges differ in terms of social characteristics such as age, origin or gender, those affected are often disproportionately affected by poverty. Material resources, especially income, play a central role in this – although social exclusion also includes other dimensions.

The *INSEK 2035* makes it clear that the state capital Potsdam is striving to strengthen its social infrastructure in a targeted manner. Social infrastructure – understood as the interface between immaterial social needs and material-physical spatial structure – is, as Högström (2011) emphasizes, a central component of inclusive urban development. Although the RZ was not primarily designed as a social support space, it de facto assumes such a function. It should be emphasized that the Rechenzentrum operates without state fundings and covers its costs only through rental incomes.

Social infrastructure not only addresses marginalized groups but also represents a good for society as a whole. Topics such as accessibility and poverty in old age are increasingly affecting broad sections of the population due to demographic change. The probability of being dependent on accessible infrastructures in the course of one's life – for example as a result of illness, old age or economic hardship – is high. Accordingly, the responsibility of urban actors to proactively meet these challenges is growing.

The Rechenzentrum makes an important contribution to the promotion of participation in economic, spatial and social terms. It creates low-threshold access, expands resources and strengthens social networks. In this way, it contributes to overcoming

future urban challenges and fulfils central elements of spatial inclusion, as formulated in the city's strategic objectives.

In addition, the RZ functions as a place of lived democratic space allocation. The form of collective negotiation practiced there about who is allowed to use spaces represents a participatory moment that contains central elements of democratic participation. In this sense, the RZ contributes to strengthening civic engagement and promoting democratic structures – aspects that are also explicitly named as guiding goals in INSEK 2035 (LHP, 2022a, p. 91).

4.3 Abductive Explanation Building

Up to this point, the individual results of the study were presented with the three research questions. Finally, all results are triangulated here. This also serves as a preliminary step for interpretation, abduction, and merging with the theory in the discussion. Here, it is not separated according to research questions, but rather which topics and contexts appear in recurring patterns, and how things can be explained through Löw's theory. Based on her theory, the empirical results, and Silver's definition of social inclusion¹⁷, the abductive explanation elaborates how and why the case of the Rechenzentrum contributes to socio-spatial inclusion in Potsdam.

In the following section, the theoretical assumptions are related to the previously obtained empirical findings. These theory-driven explanations represent the final step of the abductive well as the subsequent practice-oriented recommendations for action in the final research process and the same time form the basis for the following discussion as a chapter of the thesis.

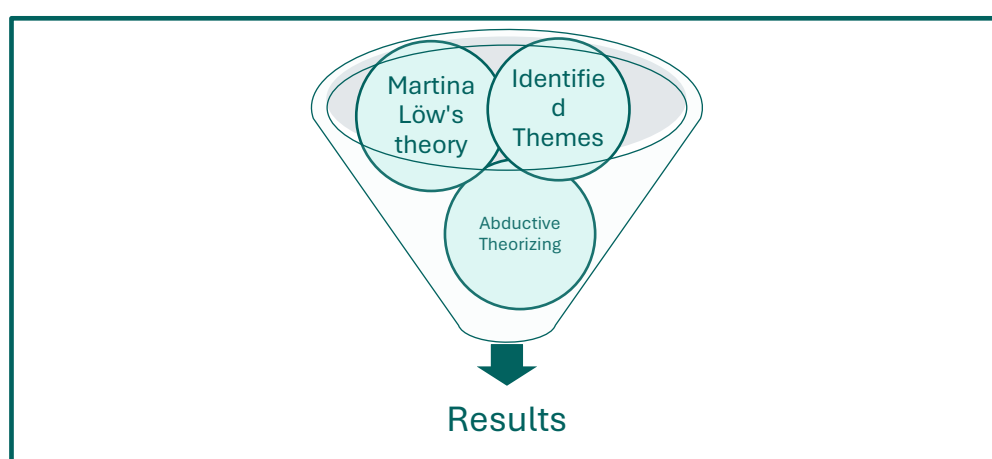


Figure 26: Abductive Explanation Process (own design)

¹⁷ According to Silver, social inclusion/exclusion is "a multidimensional, relational process that increases opportunities for social participation, improves the ability to fulfill normatively prescribed social roles, expands social bonds of respect and recognition, and strengthens social bonds, cohesion, integration, or solidarity at the collective level" (Silver, 2015, p. 2 f.).

4.3.1 Socio-Spatial Inclusion through Democratic Distribution of Space

The distribution of space in the Rechenzentrum follows a specific logic that differs significantly from the principles of a market economy. On the one hand, the use is strongly oriented towards professional and cultural practice, for example, through the rental of studios and workspaces. However, this rental is not carried out to maximize profits but only serves to cover costs and maintain the house in the long term. This form of economic organization creates a fundamental structural accessibility. In addition, the democratic component of the allocation of space plays a central role: rooms are allocated by a democratic organized member board, which attempts to ensure a transparent and balanced distribution of space. However, this procedure also reveals potential areas of tension, for example, with regard to the question of which interest groups are more strongly represented in the decision-making processes.

The RZ is characterized by a low threshold offer, which is often accessible without the need to consume. This creates a space that can be used especially for people with limited financial resources. The rooms are not only used as places of work, but also as places to stay and meet. In combination with the social and cultural offers provided by organizations such as the *Arbeiterwohlfahrt (AWO)* or *Kultur*, among others, this contributes to the inclusion of different social groups. Through events, workshops, and cultural education offers, which are accessible and most of the time free of charge or at very low prices, the RZ opens up new opportunities for participation, enhancing individual and collective resources. Especially in the field of cultural education, spaces are being created here in which people can acquire skills or build social networks, regardless of their socio-economic background. The computer center is not only a place for cultural production, but also a politically effective space. The actors working there represent certain values such as openness, solidarity, and social participation. At the same time, attempts are being made to promote political participation through projects and participatory formats. The ongoing conflict with the Garrison Church Foundation and the broad civil society support for the preservation of the RZ underline its role as a place of social negotiation processes.

Löw's characterization of space as something relational and processual and Silver's definition of social inclusion as a multidimensional process provide theoretical perspectives to better classify the case study of the Rechenzentrum. Through the interviews, it became very clear that the RZ had not set itself the conscious goal of striving for inclusion (Engel A., 2024). In that sense, it was not a formal program item or part of an agenda. Nevertheless, with the beginning of the takeover by local artists of the RZ, a place and physical structures and spaces were provided, which ultimately

led to a social and material space through the actions of the actors involved. An established institution emerged, which became and still is the subject of social and political conflicts.

Space is what takes place in between, both socially and materially (Löw, 2001). This is also the case with the RZ, because, as the interviews could see, the interpersonal relationships, be it private or collaborative between organizations, ultimately make the Rechenzentrum an arrangement of people and goods, therefore a space. It is not just a place, as people actively shape social and societal dynamics with their actions and positions in the building, which have an impact beyond the RZ into urban society. The involvement of organizations that take care of people with a refugee background, for example, addresses the fact that these people have fewer resources to provide for and are disadvantaged in society. Through the spatial provision, openness can thus break societal hierarchies.

The RZ is not only a physical place, but a politically and socially organized space. It stands in the field of tension between various urban narratives and places of remembrance, especially between the Baroque past, which is represented by the neighboring Garrison Church, and the GDR past, in which the RZ was built. In addition, there are current political disputes, for example between conservative and progressive political currents, which have made the Rechenzentrum a symbolic place. The conflict with the church over the property, as well as the media and political debate about the building, reflect a broader social debate about the understanding of history, urban development, and public spaces.

5 Conclusion

5.1 Critical Reflection of Research Process

The limitations of this study are rooted in its qualitative approach and the specific perspectives highlighted through the interviews conducted. This selective representation underscores the need for a more balanced inclusion of voices to provide a comprehensive picture of the urban political conflicts surrounding the Rechenzentrum in the future. Through the qualitative and abductive approach valuable insights could be gained but a quantitative approach could even more precisely measure the inclusionary impacts caused by the Rechenzentrum. If a wider variety of different types of data would have been included, e.g., economic data, than more information about other socioeconomic forms of inclusion could have been provided. The collection of demographic data of the interview participants would also have offered more options of analysis. More data collection of other varieties could have made comparability with other studies possible. This would also be relevant for the future. To conclude this work focuses on textual and personal perspectives from inside the Rechenzentrum, which limits its replicability of the whole case study. But the approach utilized in this thesis can still function as orientation for further research and explorations of socio-spatial inclusion in urban environments.

5.2 Policy Recommendations

This case study of Potsdam's Rechenzentrum showed that inclusive places not necessarily need to proclaim social or spatial inclusion as a direct goal. Instead, the daily practices and distributional structures of an institution are decisive for its actual societal impact. Inclusion can not simply be practiced by following a policy agenda. Inclusion emerges through structured conditions that need be addressed from a socio-spatial perspective by responsible stakeholders. Therefore, cities need to include marginalized population groups who are directly impacted by the city's social and planning politics. Participation and the right to shape spaces is crucial, so urban spaces can actually fulfill the different needs and desires of its citizens. Especially in times of right-wing politics on the rise and increasing social and spatial segregation, Potsdam should provide accessible spaces that are not dependent on people's incomes or citizenship status. Maintaining and improving the Rechenzentrum's infrastructure would open even more possibilities for future community building. Potsdam wants to fight societal polarization; therefore, it needs to increase the fair distribution of material, financial and spatial resources. Otherwise, it could be confronted with a wider gap between disadvantaged and privileged citizens leading to intensified social conflicts. Therefore, social and urban planners must think spatial

and social exclusion/inclusion together. People affected by poverty make up a big part of the population, not only in Potsdam, but also in other cities throughout Germany and Europe. By implementing institutionalized spaces protected by law, cities could for example, introduce a certain percentage of public spaces that is supposed to explicitly used for marginalized and disadvantaged groups, who could not afford to visit profit-oriented spaces. Although cities are confronted with different challenges, poverty, social exclusion and segregation are ongoing subjects of the current and future urban societies worldwide.

5.3 Perspectives

For a more comprehensive analysis, it would have been desirable to include representatives of the Garrison Church in the study in order to be able to understand the conflictual negotiation processes in an even more differentiated way. Future research could also benefit from a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to gain both deeper insights into subjective experiences and broader empirical data on the social impact of spaces like the RZ. From an urban planning perspective, the question also arises as to how comparable spaces can be specifically designed and institutionally supported in order to promote social inclusion, participation and creative appropriation in urban space.

In general, more socio-spatial perspectives and approaches need to be implemented in urban studies and social sciences to identify the intersections of spatial and social dynamics. Both dimensions influence each other which shows the necessity to work interdisciplinary and collaborative. Through social science approaches and methods of urban planning studies, more comprehensive findings could expand knowledge about the requirements for achieving inclusive cities. All in all, planners, scientists and politicians need to aim for transformational objectives to address urban justice for all, in Potsdam, Germany, and on a global scale.

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Appendix

Interview Guides

(A) Interview Guide – Rechenzentrum Members

Before we talk about you and your work right away, would you perhaps like to say a few words about what you mean by an inclusive city or what comes to mind spontaneously when you hear this term?

1. Can you say something about yourself, your role and work in the RZ at the beginning?
2. The Rechenzentrum is a socio-creative center, at the same time a civil society actor, can you explain that in more detail?
3. How do people get access to the premises and how are the rooms distributed to whom?
4. The Rechenzentrum as a "place of inclusion and integration" (document published by the RZ) – Can you explain in more detail what this looks like in practice or how the RZ implements inclusion, how it is an inclusive place?
 - a. Can you name precise strategies and goals?
 - b. What kind of inclusion in the RZ is it?
 - c. Examples of projects, measures.
5. Which groups of people are given special possibilities and opportunities by the RZ's inclusion claim?
6. The RZ represents a special mixture of art, culture and social commitment. What does this mean for the different people and their work who use the RZ?
7. In your opinion, are there also factors or actors that complicate the work and existence of the RZ?
8. What opportunities and possibilities do the RZ offer social associations and organizations?
9. The RZ is very centrally located in Potsdam, what would you say has an influence on its use?
10. What would you say if, after 5 years, I was to continue researching the Rechenzentrum, how it would have developed in terms of inclusion, or what the RZ strives for in the future?

(B) Interview Guide – Non-profit Organisation

Before we talk about you and your work right away, would you perhaps like to say a few words about what you mean by an inclusive city or what comes to mind spontaneously when you hear this term?

1. Can you start by introducing yourself, your role, your work, and how you relate to the Rechenzentrum?
2. What is/was the cooperation with the RZ like?
3. How were you able to gain access to the RZ rooms?
4. Why did you choose the RZ as the location for your work?
5. What opportunities did the location of the Rechenzentrum open up for your association?
6. Would you say there is one group of people who particularly benefit from the RZ?
7. What was it like for her to work in a house that contains such a special mixture of art, culture and social issues? Were there overlaps?
What did this mean for the different groups and the use?
8. Would you say that the RZ is an inclusive place, if so, why?
 1. Did you feel part of the Rechenzentrum?
9. Were there other similar organizations like yours in the RZ?
 1. What were the hurdles and difficulties?
 2. What could make it more difficult for other organizations doing similar work to access the RZ?
10. The RZ is very centrally located. What influence did the location of the RZ have on your work?
11. How do you think the RZ will develop in 5 years?

(C) Interview Guide - Urban Planning Department Potsdam

Before we talk about you and your work right away, would you perhaps like to say a few words about what you mean by an inclusive city or what comes to mind spontaneously when you hear this term?

1. In the context of the Integrative Urban Development Concept for 2035, there is talk of inclusive neighborhoods and the goal of a "city for all" or a Potsdam for all. Can you explain in more detail how urban planning intends to achieve these goals?
2. Could you explain some measures that have already been implemented or are planned to promote the realization of the goal of a "city for all" by 2035?
3. What kind of inclusion is assumed in the context of the desired goals of Potsdam's urban planning?
4. What form and significance of inclusion form the basis of Potsdam's urban planning in achieving it? Or: What is the meaning and form of inclusion used by Potsdam's urban planning to achieve its goals?
5. The INSEK 2035 talks about "inclusion of all population groups", which groups of people are specifically meant and why?
6. Are there certain spaces or districts in Potsdam that are particularly in focus when it comes to the implementation of inclusive urban development and why?
7. In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges in the next few years in the implementation and design of a city for everyone in Potsdam?
8. How do you assess the role of the Rechenzentrum in promoting inclusion and a Potsdam for all?
9. Assuming it is the year 2035 – where does Potsdam stand in implementing the goals regarding urban inclusion?

Newspaper Articles Search Results¹⁸

Newspaper	Title	Date	Author	URL
Der Prignitzer	Das wird ja kein preußisches Museum	23.12.2020	Klaus Peters	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/RPPA_65a71e3bebb_e657fc346d8bf3519321ea74ef2d6
Der Prignitzer	Baerbock über die Garnisonkirche	08.07.2022	dpa	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/PRIG_f50e378389fb72d0e31e7c341b85ba84f2387cc5
Der Prignitzer	Erhalten oder Abreißen?	17.06.2023	Benjamin Lassiwe	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/PRIG_f6e2cfc419d61401e1329ea3575b4aec573e1a34
Der Prignitzer	Neue Idee zur Garnisonkirche	09.07.2020	Klaus Peters	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/PRIG_f6e2cfc419d61401e1329ea3575b4aec573e1a34
Die Zeit	Nationales Tafelsilber	21.07.2022	Philipp Oswalt	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/ZEIT_392c6c6a404a4889c13b36fb22ea298cb06c545a
Die Zeit	Genau wie früher	12.11.2020	Ronald Düker	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/ZEIT_6e66a25603bf_e7b0002e2e330dedb0b93111fdb
Die Zeit	Preußen-Münster	24.05.2018	Christina Rietz	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/ZEIT_7bca3270a952d24dc5b496f073e78d21d0e3731b
Die Zeit	Was erzählen sie von damals?	30.08.2018	Christina Rietz, Paul Nolte	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/ZEIT_ad8d961b11153e6b695c3b53eefc2363e4f716c3
Taz	Das Kreuz mit der Kirche	01.11.2018	Thomas Gerlach	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/TAZ_b7cdc4a60035fba49c464748410f34f12c88edf1
Taz	"Es gibt eine Radikalisierung zum Identitären"	29.01.2024	Uwe Radatz & Philipp Oswalt	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/TAZ_33f107ad7414c_db67061aeebfec32490b4a5f5fd
Taz	Ein Symbolbau christlicher Gotteskrieger	02.04.2024	Philipp Oswalt	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/TAZ_fb10d879a9176f7ef5a19147c1c594833c0ac72e
Taz	Einigung in Potsdam	09.12.2021	epd	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/TAZ_fa70a8859f057a8910ec89cc8d016e02c8f674cb
Taz	Kultur der Zwischenrechnung	27.01.2015	Rolf Lautenschläger	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/TAZ_46def110f1bb5f33090ae7bb3e1670bcbf6acd549
Taz	Nur noch Galgenfrist für Kreative	09.03.2018	Dina Dorothea Falbe	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/TAZ_da1e836fb6be7d5a196d510c1d7b074b7cd99cf8
Taz	Potsdamer Kirchturmpolitik	08.09.2022	Marco Zschieck	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/TAZ_cc4630c6c99756d6139f0f81fb41574632f51f63
Taz	Temporärer Kulturkosmos	28.10.2015	Rolf Lautenschläger	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/TAZ_9b96952e9f8836035e0bcb62a3d817584c3c7721
Taz	Weiter vorwärts in die Vergangenheit	10.08.2017	Marco Zschieck	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/TAZ_197e477d479be7bdcf0d22f2861c19d16613b9d6
Oranienburger Generalanzeiger	Rechenzentrum darf länger neben Turm bleiben	12.07.2023	dpa	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/OBGZ_a7388de4ce9ebc2538deb2bc556bbe3346afa501
Oranienburger Generalanzeiger	Vorschlag zur Einigung	09.07.2020	dpa	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/OBGZ_65a71e3bebb_e657fc346d8bf3519321ea74ef2d6
Oranienburger Generalanzeiger	Neues Konzept ohne Kirchenschiff	09.12.2021	epd	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/OBGZ_c5eb0018c3f2e1111eefa1453d3790da8402187b
Oranienburger Generalanzeiger	Die ewige Baustelle Preußen	12.01.2024	Christian Tilmann	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/OBGZ_a8f3bddcf02ce88162927b741ac8409973d63941
Märkische Allgemeine	"Die Menschen haben andere Sorgen"	25.01.2023	Saskia Kirfen, Tiemo Reimann	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER_74c2c7e733e365fbb54de4d62c367018b2842c43
Märkische Allgemeine	"Die Stadt muss zügig konkrete Schritte einleiten"	14.03.2018	Ildiko Röd, Eschenburg	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER_12355eafdef3ea0ea8bbb17ef94eb395b2593da7
Märkische Allgemeine	"Ein positives Signal"	04.11.2022	Carsten Linke, Ildiko Röd	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER_9d6a734b9601d7dbb568b46855030f9feb773405

The search results are from 21/06/2020 and were carried out again on that date to check the accessibility of the articles.

Märkische Allgemeine	"Eine Rückkehr gibt es nicht"	30.09.2021	Wolfgang Huber, Peter Degener, Henry Lohmar	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER__0742957f20dfac02c59f61905769d2cb52f2a400
Märkische Allgemeine	„Es geht darum, ein intelligentes Zusammenspiel mit Brüchen zu schaffen“	01.07.2024	Karim Saab, Philipp Jamme	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER__02bcf7a6d33208f83785fc3dd7146a52322431b8
Märkische Allgemeine	" Es ist Zeit, diesen Streit zu beenden"	31.21.2019	Anna Sprockhoff, Peter Degener	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER__9dcb1d70123a296ac8c1bede8d17edfdde11851f
Märkische Allgemeine	" Es wäre gut, wenn sachlich diskutiert würde"	26.02.2020	Eschenburg,	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER__2e70fd1e336637b7aa34627d218caa5749f2426e
Märkische Allgemeine	" Glücksfälle und Problemfälle"	16.12.2022	Heinz Kleger, Ildiko Röd	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER__e0d0b64b8919337bd2d9378dd13318b5f0878f0b
Märkische Allgemeine	"Ich finde diesen Stil unterirdisch"	18.11.2021	Ildiko Röd, Mike Schubert	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER__87bc8872b67eecab7700eaf4e8890ae7be364e83
Märkische Allgemeine	" Wir kämpfen nicht für uns persönlich"			
Märkische Allgemeine	Abriss Ost	15.07.2017	Ulrich Wagenmann & Linda Teutenberg	
Märkische Allgemeine	Ach, mein Potsdam	30.06.2022	Ildiko Röd, Frauke Röth	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER__5a6c2ea60cb a02da230eb05f2a29cb8aee65f95f
Märkische Allgemeine	"Wichtige Akteure fehlen"	12.12.2017	vo	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER__357e73475a8771d0fa0a867d481b556f786547c7
Märkische Allgemeine	"Sicherheits-zone am Bahnhof einrichten"	07.08.2018	Ildiko Röd, Dennis Hohloch	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER__097fb15764d0d98ca77bc53e0ae4df088f409a3e
Märkische Allgemeine	" Poker" auf Kosten des Rechenzentrums?	08.07.2022	Ildiko Röd	
Märkische Allgemeine	250 Kunst- und Kreativ-schaffende	22.08.2017	No author	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER__dcb41cae1d6da6ef0b63bb657144f1b8a4c4ad9
Märkische Allgemeine	Ach mein Potsdam	12.12.2019	Christian Näthe	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER__02217d61be81b2d1ad46ca76055c0514f2cbd410
Märkische Allgemeine	Alles hängt am Kuratorium	24.08.2022	Peter Degener	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER__6068adaefe8576b52175dcd4737b4301762bc5c5
Märkische Allgemeine	Kein Geld für Sprengung des Garnisonkirchturms	09.06.2023	Saskia Kirf	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER__0cfd22e46224f2452cdee1957e5b08b34f10ccc0
Märkische Allgemeine	Schäuble war ein Freund Potsdams	29.12.2023	Ulrich Wangemann	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER__f180f380d75f510032a3766efc35212912a0147c
Märkische Allgemeine	Gegenreden im Kreativhaus	26.03.2024	No author	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER__b34dfecd755b6842e90cb06ba0f5e86f505c8584
Märkische Allgemeine	Für eine sozial gerechte Stadt	18.05.2024	Tim R. Hartmann	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER__ace1f2c527db691806a4b665afe6ce00c422b2db
Märkische Allgemeine	Europa-Partei Volt will Potsdam mobil und digital machen	28.05.2024	Rieke Geserich	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER__a1f8db7d591ec5432297edddfb222a8a7db4978
Märkische Allgemeine	Plenarsaal an der Garnisonkirche: Zweifel an der Umsetzung	15.08.2024	Peter Degener	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER__76624f2c25bd90cd4f4d9e3b75d5fa352b9bce0d
Märkische Allgemeine	Wo Hasso Plattner Museen baut und Wolfgang Joop Orchideen tauft	26.02.2025	Ildiko Röd	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER__83c8bd45d680b462b9be1164a7461cddb0f690b53
Märkische Allgemeine	Betreiber-Genossenschaft fürs Kreativquartier	12.03.2025	Volker Oelschläger	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER__d7b629657363e7211ed0c3a68cec742236bf85a9
Märkische Allgemeine	Das Rechenzentrum wird abgewickelt	11.04.2025	Volker Oelschläger	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER__6b757c60df29c8937fd0f232c40a9f43f53a2977
Märkische Allgemeine	Mit Promi-Unterstützung: Kreative aus	10.05.2025	Isabelle Richter	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER__c8b762765aa f78553462ec6ba1b1913f3f83d559
Märkische Allgemeine	Nicht nur Streit	08.06.2024	Peter Degener	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER__90e37ca12b806e6edb4236460de6a04e2c4cd719
Märkische Allgemeine	Aufklärung zum Kreativquartier	02.04.2022	Peter Degener	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER__e08f72ea3be00890b4331643c65708b145a03866
Märkische Allgemeine	Breite Zustimmung für Kunsthaus im Rechenzentrum	16.01.2015	Volker Oelschläger	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER__4b921971d7dc2c03307541223cdb489940f6406f

Märkische Allgemeine	CDU Gegen Schutz fürs Rechenzentrum	09.08.2021	Saskia Kirf	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER_69365bc1244ced492a4117acda14646c55bd0af6
Märkische Allgemeine	Das erwartet Potsdam im neuen Jahr	02.01.2021	Volker Oehlschläger, Sarah Kugler, Peter Degener, Saskia Kirf	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER_88c752b7c5e4bc601661196a0a3afb5bfe9ae91f
Märkische Allgemeine	Das sind die Streitthemen im Potsdamer Stadtparlament	01.01.2021	Peter Degener	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER_2466609e651dad8d5dfa19bef446c720a01f824
Märkische Allgemeine	Demo begrüßt heute die Stadtpolitik	06.11.2019	Alexander Engels	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER_07d4f4246f6739ffa78b762528eacbbcd3c65a1e
Märkische Allgemeine	Der " Geist von Weimar" trifft den " Geist von "	11.02.2019	Lothar Krone	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER_f512a15f9280a4f93efb1a351aad13d7dc12ee5e
Märkische Allgemeine	Die Andere geht mit neuer Fraktion ins Sitzungsjahr	06.09.2022	Ildiko Röd	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER_eeed1c20ed1bf6d3215e14130a984d2fc3df0a4e
Märkische Allgemeine	Die Haltung der Bürger zählt jetzt	08.12.2021	Peter Degener	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER_2a5cb2eaa80b8cf71bdd5b1581ad1bfce8d34b81
Märkische Allgemeine	Ein neuer "Abend über Potsdam"	03.11.2018	Anne Knappe	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER_9fe11b4706c519b2ae343bfa39f9c17dfc771ad3
Märkische Allgemeine	Einschmelzen des Glockenspiels? Eine überhitzte Idee!	12.08.2020	Peter Degener	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER_03bccf29ee2f0c5d625994b1693ca4c5a7883978
Märkische Allgemeine	Erkennbarkeit als politischer Trumpf	08.06.2019	Volker Oelschläger	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER_2cd952dd08d41fb134c6901c882ad9846f76f158
Märkische Allgemeine	Ersatz fürs Rechenzentrum	05.12.2017	Volker Oelschläger	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER_e14d6c3f1ee67f038abe6f7bfe0d45dcbe74934
Märkische Allgemeine	Erst der Bürgerdialog, nun die Anhörung - und was dann?	23.01.2020	Volker Oelschläger	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER_90c52455a40cd25cb069000bb2187a8cfe7b17e5
Märkische Allgemeine	Europa-Partei Volt will Potsdam mobil und digital machen	28.05.2024	Rieke Griesch	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER_a1f8db7d591ec5432297edddf2b222a8a7db4978
Märkische Allgemeine	FH-Abriss: Stadt forciert das Tempo	08.01.2015	No author	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER_21b18e8447ce77f0c6b231f780dcb5719cb5c24
Märkische Allgemeine	Forum zur Beteiligung in Potsdam	21.04.2016	V.O.	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER_687195d74ea8c2991acd267698bf4827bdec3c13
Märkische Allgemeine	Garnisonkirche: Stiftungsrecht verhindert "Haus der Demokratie"	24.08.2022	Peter Degener	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER_da3fe0ab5199b36eb446d66f30ba5de86637e0d4
Märkische Allgemeine	Hochschulen kooperieren mit dem Kreativhaus	14.12.2021	pede	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER_663a3c9f50d9dfdd7b5b19126625027c66532207
Märkische Allgemeine	Irritationen zum neuen Quartier für Kreative	01.03.2022	Peter Degener	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER_192250bb5fa432e6cbfc18616856d1362f5c60fb
Märkische Allgemeine	Kein Kompromiss in Sicht	22.01.2020	Peter Degener	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER_942de02f2e73a9efe3f1436098b1aa490494ab27
Märkische Allgemeine	Konsens um jeden Preis?	28.11.2019	Peter Degener	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER_1c399cb6280fc625286b90437ff6d3a0afd26a41
Märkische Allgemeine	Kopfschütteln über eine unendliche Geschichte	02.11.2015	No author	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER_8c5d3b282ac87545a9dc4ec0751f010067cbbab4
Märkische Allgemeine	Kunst-Gottesdienst für die Kreativen	22.09.2017	Volker Oelschläger	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER_96953e0cbe95dae40e00a66272b17063eb2d45cb
Märkische Allgemeine	Künstler auf Ortstermin im Rechenzentrum	12.03.2015	Volker Oelschläger	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER_03675ea12940918c60e37b1c7eebe9c3338ad
Märkische Allgemeine	Manipuliert die Stadt beim Turmbau?	18.08.2021	Peter Degener	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER_b76350e5500f3b9f3861cb13e8bad95bf15ecb94
Märkische Allgemeine	Mieter im Kreativhaus rennt die Zeit davon	12.04.2018	Peter Degener	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER_05883e80d280661f29263dd51db5a7dfdc68e985
Märkische Allgemeine	Neue Hoffnung für Rechenzentrum	30.11.2019	Peter Degener, Volker Oelschläger	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER_3dd535f3d4c22b9d7baf579d1f475bcbba20f2fd
Märkische Allgemeine	Neuer Rettungsversuch fürs Kunsthaus	23.05.2025	Volker Oelschläger	https://www.wiso-net.de/document/MAER_4b044b90fc76d8adea5596183aaf81c6a05f877d

Märkische Allgemeine	Nur der Turm? " Da denkt man: Huch, was ist das für ein Phallus?"	15.09.2022	Jörg Hartmann, Ildiko Röd	https://www.wiso- net.de/document/MAER_ff552388e051f c2a1f4a51deee462d6c9cc7f97c
Märkische Allgemeine	Oeffnen, begrünen, aufstocken	19.02.2022	Peter Degener	https://www.wiso- net.de/document/MAER_47380a9dc08 4ef4db5c9e1602a7ec6fdbb8b8d00a
Märkische Allgemeine	Plenarsaal an der Garnisonkirche: Zweifel an der Umsetzung	15.08.2024	Peter Degener	https://www.wiso- net.de/document/MAER_76624f2c25b d90cd4f4d9e3b75d5fa352b9bce0d
Märkische Allgemeine	Politik berät Schuberts Vorschlag zur Plantage	04.01.2022	Peter Degener	https://www.wiso- net.de/document/MAER_6519d6c681c 1542c0764261bfb5b90342d0a447e
Märkische Allgemeine	Politikverdrossen? Von wegen!	18.09.2021	Yunuz Gündüz	https://www.wiso- net.de/document/MAER_d6008c065e6 47dccea462b51a6d185f7b893b0a5
Märkische Allgemeine	Rathaus-Chef unter Erfolgsdruck	04.04.2022	Peter Degener, Anna Sprockhoff	https://www.wiso- net.de/document/MAER_ca32c056a4c 0641fa706acb1aa78f2fe8936ed64
Märkische Allgemeine	Rechenzentrum muss weiter um Nutzungsverlängerung bangen	03.11.2022	Ildiko Röd	https://www.wiso- net.de/document/MAER_d98816f8f924 348ab180ae1f79fd034e15ebbeff
Märkische Allgemeine	Regeln der Beteiligung	03.03.2015	Volker Oelschläger	https://www.wiso- net.de/document/MAER_8b254ac219e ce007af10b1f31267c5d95c40d20f
Märkische Allgemeine	Sicherung des Kunstwerks beginnt im Juli	09.07.2020	Peter Degener	https://www.wiso- net.de/document/MAER_a47819aaf0d 05daf48e54eb87479f0e3e1d66afb
Märkische Allgemeine	Stadt plant weitere Kreativschmiede	06.11.2025	No author	https://www.wiso- net.de/document/MAER_fc87d944592 343e58401d7e4de8b6434fa870c43
Märkische Allgemeine	Stadt veröffentlicht Verträge zu Garnisonkirche	13.01.2022	Volker Oelschläger	https://www.wiso- net.de/document/MAER_2810acf45c59 8640fd19e08fc6e4c8d9ec68728c
Märkische Allgemeine	Stiftung gegen Denkmalstatus für Rechenzentrum	07.08.2021	ost	https://www.wiso- net.de/document/MAER_1f361fe24521 5cd2aba8aeba37e67e981979baac
Märkische Allgemeine	Stiftung soll auf ihr Vetorecht verzichten	10.02.2023	No author	https://www.wiso- net.de/document/MAER_ba75f5905f7b 6ec8dfcf804f0d6c17cd55b889aa
Märkische Allgemeine	Stiftung verheimlichte Prüfbericht	10.02.2022	Peter Degener	https://www.wiso- net.de/document/MAER_2f95d020501 698eb5749c4775d5ce9661d6f5e73
Märkische Allgemeine	Stillstand beim Kreativquartier	28.02.2022	Peter Degener	https://www.wiso- net.de/document/MAER_dca68e0ce11 b4274ee8473d14566bad7b183b4b7
Märkische Allgemeine	Verein FÜR wählt neuen Vorstand	17.03.2018	V.O.	https://www.wiso- net.de/document/MAER_91c3ecd6e12 fb0985140d00d7834fcf1af5735a3
Märkische Allgemeine	Wiederaufbauen oder nicht?	19.09.2025	No author	https://www.wiso- net.de/document/MAER_cac9e4bec47 461bb76442e7d4fe178c2fc8ea814
Märkische Allgemeine	Zahlen sprechen gegen Husarenkaserne	18.04.2020	Volker Oelschläger	https://www.wiso- net.de/document/MAER_fd176d41992 a37a6076a385e5f72169882be7fa6
Märkische Allgemeine	Zankapfel unter Schutz	30.07.2021	Volker Oelschläger	https://www.wiso- net.de/document/MAER_6b408d8cb40 1e76927e5cca7e617032880bf2ac6
Märkische Allgemeine	Zieht die Politik ans Rechenzentrum?	17.11.2021	Ildiko Röd	https://www.wiso- net.de/document/MAER_7b5e6b769e8 0ac1d0b90597cddbdf41a66da576c
Märkische Oderzeitung	Die ewige Baustelle Preußen	12.01.2024	Christina Tillmann, Philipp Oswalt	https://www.wiso- net.de/document/MOZ_a8f3bddcf02ce 88162927b741ac8409973d63941
Märkische Oderzeitung	Entscheidung macht traurig	18.12.2021	Henning Höhne, Schiffmühle	https://www.wiso- net.de/document/MOZ_ab279dc100d6 4b2672a258df27be647d3a998fccc
Märkische Oderzeitung	Neues Konzept ohne Kirchenschiff	09.12.2021	epd	https://www.wiso- net.de/document/MOZ_c5eb0018c3f2 e1111eefa1453d3790da8402187b
Märkische Oderzeitung	Rechenzentrum darf länger Neben Turm bleiben	12.07.2023	dpa	https://www.wiso- net.de/document/MOZ_a7388de4ce9e bc2538deb2bc556bbe3346afa501
Märkische Oderzeitung	Vorschlag zur Einigung	09.07.2020	dpa	https://www.wiso- net.de/document/MOZ_65a71e3bebbe 657fc346d8bf3519321ea74ef2d6
Märkische Oderzeitung	Die ewige Baustelle Preußen	12.01.2024	Christina Tillmann, Philipp Oswalt	https://www.wiso- net.de/document/MOZ_a8f3bddcf02ce 88162927b741ac8409973d63941